

Vindiciæ Priestleianæ:

AN
ADDRESS
TO THE
STUDENTS
OF
OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE;

OCCASIONED BY

A LETTER to DR. PRIESTLEY from a Person calling himself an UNDERGRADUATE, but publicly and uncontradictedly ascribed to Dr. HORNE, Dean of Canterbury, and President of Magdalen College, Oxford.

BY THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, A.M.

FORMERLY FELLOW OF ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

Opinionum commenta delet dies: naturæ, deique, judicium confirmat.

CICERO.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED FOR J. JOHNSON, NO. 72, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-
YARD. M.DCC.LXXXVIII.

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T H E

P R E F A C E.

TH E idea of drawing up the following tract first arose from observing a studied affectation in many persons of treating Dr. Priestley's theological and metaphysical writings with slight and contempt, and an endeavour in others particularly to infuse the like sentiments of him into the rising generation: which last I could not but look upon as of pernicious consequence, tending to prevent their acquaintance with a writer, from whose various works, above those of any other in our own country, they might reap the greatest advantage both in respect of useful knowlege and virtuous improvement.

I had no view therein, was I capable of it, of lending him any aid against the attacks made upon him, as if he were in danger of being overpowered by his opponents. For he is more than equal to a whole host of them ; which they have all experienced in their turns ; bishop Horsely, one of the most violent of them, the least of all excepted. But I thought it might be possible for another to suggest some circumstances, and to say certain things in his behalf, which he would never think of offering, and which indeed could not so properly come from himself ; by which the edge of prejudice might be taken off, and a juster estimate formed of him and his writings.

I am not however without hope, that I may be able to produce something in confirmation of those very important points, which he has been called out to defend. And if I should not see others exactly in the same light with him, it will cause no breach or coolness in our friendship. For although he has no high opinion of Plato, as a metaphysician, or theologian, he will approve

approve the good sense of that apology of his for giving up his favourite Homer,

de Rep. l. x. Καίτοι Φιλία γέ τις με καὶ αἰδώς
ἐκ παίδος ἔχουσα περὶ Ὁμήρου ἀποκώλυε λῆγειν

—, ἀλλ' ὃ γὰρ πρό γε τῆς ἀληθείας τιμντεὸς
ἀνὴρ.

I am mistaken, if many will not be surprised at a very *recent fact*, but little known, which I have had occasion to mention, concerning the ecclesiastical authority exercised by the english bishops over the Americans, since they became independent of the civil power of this country. It will appear incredible to them, that in these enlightened times, the leading clergy should seek to put the episcopalians upon that continent, under *barrows of iron*, and constrain them, as far as they could, to receive the spurious creed of Athanasius, and to become shackled with other religious fetters, from which Tillotson, Hoadley, Herring, &c. would have rejoiced to have delivered others, as well as to have been delivered themselves.

Having been led to say something concerning *the history of the fall*, I have spoken

without reserve, and I trust, not without some proof alleged, as much as I had room for, of the non-existence of such evil beings, as *the devil, satan, and demons* without end, mentioned in the scriptures. I have been informed that the apparent (a) letting loose as it were of so many of these last, at the first preaching of the gospel, was one of the principal things that contributed to make the ingenious *Rousseau* an unbeliever; as it seemed to him, with good reason, a thing quite out of nature, and probability. But a proper inquiry, and investigation would have shewn him, that

(a) One is surprized that the learned *Fortin*, should have paid so little attention to this subject, and to what Mede and Sykes had remarked upon it, (for Lardner and Farmer had not then published their sentiments) as to fall into this strange notion of demons having a greater license than usual to afflict mankind, in the age of the apostles. 'One reason, says he, 'for which the divine providence should suffer spirits 'to exert their malignant powers so much at that time, might 'be to give a check to Sadduceism among the jews, and to 'epicurean atheism among the gentiles, and to remove in 'some measure these two impediments to the gospel.' Rem. on Eccl. Hist. vol. i. p. 14. We may venture to pronounce, that no sadducee, or epicurean atheist, was ever converted by such instrumentality, and argument.

that there was no *phenomenon* of the kind at that time more than at any other; and that these things being mentioned by the sacred writers is no proof of their reality. They expressed themselves on these matters agreeably to the superstition of the times and their own prejudices. And so far is their representation of things, however mistaken therein, from invalidating the sacred history, that it is a proof of its antiquity, and genuineness.

It would be no difficult task, by a few remarks interspersed, and illustrations of the several passages of the bible, where the word *Satan*, &c. is named, to enable the commonest reader to see, that divine revelation gives no countenance to the existence of any such evil beings, or to any power but that of our benevolent creator being exercised over us. And I hope this will be considered, among many other things, in a new version of the bible, whenever it is undertaken without respect to any great churches, or parties in religion.

Some little merit I will take to myself in one thing, because it is not my own, and I am merely concerned in it as a translator; *viz.* in having produced to light the MS. of

Castellio's, published about thirty years since by Wetstein, but never noticed that I know by any one since, in our own or any other country. It is so very free, that the editor seemed almost afraid of exhibiting it, lest he should give offence; as you will observe from his words in the margin (*b*), with which he introduces it. And yet the distinction that the author makes, between the several parts of the scriptures, and the different account we ought to make of each, is so just and full of good sense; that every judicious person will approve it. I would add, that this incomparable critic will

(*b*) Animus etiam erat, ad examen revocare, quæ S. Castellio paulo ante obitum de interpretatione scripturæ in chartas coniecerat; cum vero nec libri ad manum sint de arte hermeneutica scripti, quos cum systemate MS. conferrem, nec tantum otii nunc habeam, malui aliorum prius judicia experiri qui etiam si forte aliter sentiant atque clarissimus ille scripturæ interpres, non ægre tamen ferent, spero, quæ cogitate meditatus est, a situ et interitu vindicata, se-cum communicari. Saltem quod ad me attinet, malim legere scriptum viri docti et pii, meæ sententiæ oppositum, quam scriptum hominis mali et indocti pro mea sententiæ editum. A tali adversario semper aliquod discimus, &c. Wetstein. N. T. vol. ii. p. 884.

will satisfy any one that is unprejudiced, that even greater liberties may be taken than Dr. Priestley or others have done, with relation to the characters and imperfect reasonings in the scriptures, without hurting the evidence for the facts of the New Testament, or weakening the foundation of our faith, which rests on the well authenticated miracles of Christ and his apostles, and his resurrection from the dead.

Of the late *bishop Butler* I had some little personal knowlege, not long before he was raised to the see of Durham; but had an opportunity of knowing more of his character from a correspondence, which he had long kept up with a friend he highly respected, and to whom he communicated himself very freely. He had great piety, but it was of a gloomy cast, and tending to superstition; which he might have caught from reading the lives of romish saints, some of which I was the means of handing to him. He always appeared dissatisfied with the public state of things and of the world; which might originate from his views of divine providence,

providence, that in **his** system could certainly afford but little chearfulness to those who thoroughly imbibed it. I hope it has been shewn, in the following work, that the opinion much insisted on by him, and which raises the most melancholy suspicions of the deity, *viz. that repentance alone is not sufficient to restore sinful creatures to the favour of their maker*, is as void of foundation in scripture, as it is contrary to all rational sentiments of the Divine Being, and to all just conclusions from reason and fact. What a door also does it open to the worst superstition, to be told that a return to sincere piety and virtue will not satisfy or appease the divine displeasure against sin? What evil is there, which the opinion of God not being in his own nature placable, hath not caused, both in the christian and pagan worlds?

It was tedious, though necessary, to repeat many things before noted, by myself and others, to shew what a mistaken interpreter of scripture the Dean of Canterbury is in his printed Discourses; from which I have made some few citations. But the change, (must not I call it!) which
he

he has made in *the object of religious worship*, throughout the two volumes of his commentaries on the psalms, will to many appear to exceed all belief; in his solemnly, and frequently, nay almost intirely addressing prayer to Jesus Christ, by name, whom he also stiles, *God, LORD God, LORD of hosts, God of Israel*. What will the unbeliever say to this, done by an approved high dignity of the church-established, when he looks into our sacred books, and finds no such God there?

N. B. I have just now been informed, that Dr. Ross, bishop of Exeter, was one of the clerical assembly at Tennison's library, mentioned, p. 51. who united with others now also on the episcopal bench, to request a revisal of the articles and liturgy and forms of subscription of the church; in the year 1772.

* * * The second proposed part of this work, see p. 2. 3. is in good forwardness, and will in due time be laid before the public.

his name in the eyes of the world, and
 was throughout the two volumes of his
 commentaries on the psalms, and to many
 appear to exceed all belief in his solemnity,
 and frequently, may almost infinitely adding
 prayer to Jesus Christ, my name, whom he
 also calls, God, I am God, Lord of hosts,
 Lord of Armies. What will the unbeliever
 say to this, done by an approved high dig-
 nity of the church established, when he
 looks into our sacred books, and finds no
 such God there?

It is now, I have just now been informed,
 that the Rev. Bishop of Exeter, was one
 of the clerical assembly at London's H-
 lary, mentioned p. 41. who I read with
 others now, and on the episcopal bench, to
 read a revival of the articles and thirty-
 nine articles of the church of the church,
 in the year 1789.

* The second proposed part of this work,
 vol. p. 2. 3. is in good forwardness,
 and will in due time be laid before
 the public.

T H E
C O N T E N T S.

SECTION I.

Design of the work. Dr. Priestley's laudable motives in addressing the youth of the universities. The real author of the letter to him under the name of an undergraduate. p. i

SECTION II.

Subscription to the creeds and articles of the church, a grievance long complained of. Archbishop Tillotson's wish concerning Athanasius's creed. Curious history of a contrary temper in the present day. Of Mr. Locke's sentiment. Of Dr. Clarke's. Of Mr. Whiston's. The candid disquisitions. The clerical petitioners at the Feathers. Clerical assembly at Tennison's library. Of Dr. Durell's sentiment. Of Bishop Lowth's. p. 14

SECTION

SECTION III.

Of Dr. Priestley's character, as a philosopher and theologian. p. 60

SECTION IV.

Of the charges against Dr. Priestley for having no fixed creed.

Important truth not to be concealed. Offences wrongly taken at Dr. Priestley's publication of the progress of his inquiries. Impartial inquirers have no fixed creed. Service of Dr. Priestley's writings to the cause of the gospel. Reasons of Dr. Horne not seeing this. p. 71

SECTION V.

What is the just idea of the inspiration of the sacred writers. The certain ground upon which we go in this way of considering it; and its advantages. Dr. Horne's error with respect to the particular inspiration of the writer of the epistle to the hebrews. p. 85

SECTION VI.

Moses's account of the transgression of our first parents, much misrepresented through the bias of wrong religious systems. It is probable, according

ing to Dr. Priestley's conjecture, that he did not receive that account from a particular divine inspiration. How it is to be interpreted. Justification of this way of interpretation, from similar instances in scripture, especially Christ's temptation. A farther confirmation of the probability, that Moses drew up his history of the fall, in the manner here stated.

P. 99.

SECTION VII.

Dr. Priestley's freedom in mentioning some defects in St. Paul's reasoning, and in criticising other parts of scripture, countenanced by other christians of acknowledged eminence; by Erasmus; Castellio; Luther; Mr. Whiston; Dr. Durell.

p. 116.

SECTION VIII.

Concerning the person of Christ.

The eternal God a feeble suffering man! How the minds of many are capable of being reconciled to such a strange assertion. Throughout the Hebrew scriptures, Christ uniformly spoken of as a man, a great prophet, who was to be born of a particular tribe and family among them. The

jews

jews expected him, and those who received him, believed in him, in that character only. The three former evangelists, and Luke in his second treatise, never seem to have had a thought of Christ being any other than a man like themselves, with extraordinary powers from God. The evangelist St. John, and the rest of the writers of the N. T. do not differ from the preceding. A singular testimony to the spreading of this true doctrine concerning Christ. The testimony to it of the late Dr. Le Courayer. p. 165.

SECTION IX.

Christ's power necessarily limited. How far it is to be supposed, that he passed through childhood and youth, without any fault or breach of duty. That he was of a nature liable to fall into sin, acknowledged by himself, and declared by his apostle. Of the limitations of Christ's knowledge, and the instances of it produced by Dr. Priestley. p. 189.

SECTION X.

The sufficiency of Christ for his office of teacher and saviour of the world, does not depend upon his miraculous conception. Dr. Priestley's reasons for

for his opinion concerning it. How the question is to be decided. P. 207.

SECTION XI.

Christ's shedding of his blood, how to be understood. Sacrifices, their origin, and intent. Nothing done by Christ to atone for mens sins, or to make God more favourable and propitious to them than he was before. Repentance is all that is necessary to recommend sinners to the divine mercy and favour. Christ's intercession, what intended by it. P. 211

SECTION XII.

The late bishop Butler's great error, that repentance alone is not sufficient to obtain pardon of God, without the interposition of Jesus Christ. The melancholy description given by him of the divine government. The sources of his unhappy mistake. His misrepresentation of the world we live in, and its inhabitants. God, and the world, men, and their expectations hereafter, far better than his system would make them. P. 237

SECTION XIII.

Dr. Priestley's assertion, that men have no souls distinct from their bodies, concerns not at all our living again in another world. Dr. Horne mistaken in his proof from scripture relating to it. The popular language there concerning it, how to be understood. Luther's sentiment of the sleep of the soul, little different: The doctrine revived by bishop Law; defended by Archdeacon Blackburne; agreeable to true philosophy, and the scriptures. How easy to retaliate Dr. Horne's treatment of Dr. Priestley.

p. 271

SECTION XIV.

Of Dr. Horne's wrong interpretation of several passages of scripture.

p. 288

SECTION XV.

Of Dr. Horne's commentary on the psalms. Difficulty of the prophetic writings. A caution concerning them. Dr. Horne's wrong method of interpretation. Various instances of it. Remarks on them.

p. 312

SECTION

SECTION XVI.

*The reply of the Students to Dr. Horne for his
letter to Dr. Priestley, in their names.* p. 329

A POSTSCRIPT.

*Of Dr. Priestley's history of early opinions con-
cerning Jesus Christ.* p. 335

ERRATA.

- p. 49. l. 9. *for hands read hand*
- p. 91. l. 15. *dele should be*
- p. 97. l. 19. *for leads r. lead*
- p. 106. note l. 4. *from bottom for Christ ; r. Christ,*
- p. 107. note l. 4. *for young persons r. youth*
- p. 168. l. 11. *for writing r. writings*
- p. 170 note *for shese r. these*
- p. 206. l. 8. *for he says r. I say*
- p. 221. l. 7. *for there r. these*
- p. 231. l. 5. *for he means r. the means*
- p. 233. note l. 4. *for there mentioned r. Rom. viii. 34.*
- p. 315. l. 16. *for inculcates r. inculcate*

TO THE
YOUNGER STUDENTS
OF THE
TWO UNIVERSITIES.

SECTION I.

Design of the work. Dr. Priestley's laudable motives in addressing the youth of the universities. The real author of the letter to him under the name of an undergraduate.

THERE cannot be a more commendable employment than to endeavour, in any degree, to form or excite the minds of youth to piety and virtue, and to assist them in their enquiries after truth; those among them especially, who, like you, are destined

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to

to act important parts upon the theatre of the world, and who must, by your situations, do much good or much harm in it.

This I profess to be my aim and ambition in these thoughts which I have publicly addressed to you, respecting the matters in discussion between Dr. Horne and Dr. Priestley, in which you bear a considerable part; and in my farther notification of certain things, in some others of Dr. Horne's writings, which may mislead you most essentially, and which you may be otherwise apt to take upon trust without examination, from a deference to his authority, and known worthy character.

And from an earnest desire in particular to assist you in understanding the revelation, which we believe the Divine Being to have given of himself, and of his will, and moral government over the human race, to which we belong; I have been farther prompted to lay before you some samples of the only just method of interpreting the sacred volume, which contains that revelation, with a large exemplification of the contrary method; and have closed the whole with a catalogue of
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the *false readings* of Scripture, which have been introduced at different times, and continued, through an undue prejudice in favour of the doctrine of the trinity and the divinity of Jesus Christ; accompanied with a list of the *mistranslations* of our english bible, which have arisen from the same cause, and still remain.

Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you, says our Saviour Christ, Luke vi. 26. to his apostles, who were to carry on the instruction and reformation of the world, after he had left it; to warn them, that a general applause, in their department, was not to be obtained without mean compliances, and soothing men in their idolatry and sinful practices.

This *wo* assuredly belongs not to Dr. Priestley, whatever be his merits or demerits in other respects. His frankness in publishing the progress of his inquiries into the scriptures, and early christian antiquity, and the doctrines and opinions he has drawn from those sources, oftentimes contrary to what had been established and held sacred

for ages, has excited the zeal and displeasure of those against him, who from various and different motives would have every thing relating to religion remain quiet and untouched; and of others, who unhappily suppose the salvation of mankind to depend upon holding certain articles of belief, which he maintains to be void of all foundation: so that many set no bounds to their evil speaking, and ignorant censures of him.

Such however has been the lot in all ages, among their cotemporaries, of the truest friends and benefactors of mankind, who have set themselves to oppose and correct popular errors, especially in the things of religion: Socrates, one of the most virtuous of men, and a preacher of truth in his day, according to the lights given him, was accused of poisoning the minds of youth. If the dispassionate wise and good approve, the accusations of others may be more easily borne. Whether any just cause of complaint or offence, has been now given, you will judge from what I shall offer.

Dr. now

Dr: now Bp. Horfeley, Mr. White, Mr. Howes, Dr. Horne, dean of Canterbury, and president of Magdalen college, Oxford, have lately appeared in print against our author, chiefly with an intention to confute what he has advanced concerning the divine unity, and the person of Christ. The state of the argument betwixt himself and Dr. Horfeley, Dr. Priestley has mentioned in page 10, &c. of his letters to Dr. Horne; and has made some animadversions on Mr. White, in his “Importance and extent of free inquiry in matters of religion;” and in his *Defences of Unitarianism for the year 1787*, p. 71 to 108, hath made a full reply to the charges, which Mr. Howes hath brought against him.

The president of Magdalen maintains, that there are three divine persons, who are each of them Gods, and equally to be worshiped; and yet that these three persons, thus distinctly to be invoked, are not three Gods, but one God: a doctrine, and a worship this, as appears from the face of the scriptures, and will more appear the

more accurately they are examined, wholly unknown to Moses, and to Jesus, and his apostles : and, to the philosophic inquirer, nature's (a) light certainly teaches its great author and creator, God, to be one person only, one conscious mind, one single intelligent agent, wise and good.

After having shewn the inconclusiveness of Dr. Horne's arguments in defence of this Trinity in Unity, as he styles it from the creed ascribed to Athanasius, it was natural for

(a) " The plain argument for the existence of the
 " Deity, obvious to all, and carrying irresistible conviction
 " with it, is from the evident contrivance and fitness of
 " things for one another, which we meet with through-
 " out all parts of the universe. There is no need of nice
 " and subtle reasonings in this matter: a manifest contri-
 " vance immediately suggests a contriver. It strikes us
 " like a sensation; and artful reasonings against it may
 " puzzle us, but it is without shaking our belief. No
 " person, for example, that knows the principles of op-
 " tics, and the structure of the eye, can believe that it was
 " formed without skill in that science; or that the ear was
 " formed without the knowledge of sounds; or that the male
 " and female in animals were not formed for each other, and
 " for continuing the species. All our accounts of nature
 " are full of instances of this kind. The admirable and
 " beautiful structure of things for final causes, exalts our
 " idea of the *Contriver*: the unity of design shews him to
 " be *One*."—*Maclaurin's account of Sir Isaac Newton's*
philosophical discoveries, p. 400. 8vo.

for Dr. Priestley to turn his eyes to you, O ye noble, and ingenuous youth, the nation's hope, and future ornament and support, I trust ! concerned and grieved at the thought, that you should be constrained at any time, particularly at so early a period as some of you have done, to subscribe and declare your belief of a doctrine so irreconcilable to reason and to scripture, together with that of original or birth-sin, &c. &c. (b) connected with it.

From a foresight of the difficulties, in which those of you in particular, who are designed for sacred orders, will probably be involved, if ever you should search the scriptures in earnest for yourselves, and find the daily service of the church, in which you are bound to minister, and the articles of faith, to which your teachings are to be conformable, inconsistent with the convictions of your consciences ; he presses and

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solicits

(b) A late excellent prelate, who earnestly wished for a farther reformation, and was not wanting in endeavours to promote it, was wont sometimes in familiar conversation with friends, humourously to call original or birth-sin, *the sin of being born.*

solicits you, by the most cogent and affectionate arguments (*d*), to consider this in time, and to take the measures, which might be effectual to remedy and redress so heavy a grievance.

Nor are those among you, who are intended merely to discharge the duties and offices of civil life, unconcerned in this matter as they may imagine, so as to be under no obligation to take a part in it.

Next

(*c*) "Let titles of honour and dominion go as the providence of God will have, yet quiet and peaceable men will not fail of their obedience: no more will I of aught, so be that *God* and *good conscience* command not the contrary. A higher degree of duty I do not see any man can demand at my hands: for whereas the exception of *good conscience* sounds not well with many men, because oftentimes under that form, *pertinacy* and *wilfulness* is suspected to couch itself; in this case, it concerns every man sincerely to know the truth of his own heart, and so accordingly to determine of his own way, *whatsoever* the judgment of his *superiors* be, or *whatsoever event* befall him. For since, in case of conscience, many times there is a necessity to fall either into *the hands of men*, or into *the hands of God*; of these two, whether is the best, I leave every particular man to judge: only I will add thus much, it is a *fearful thing* to trifle with *conscience*; for most assuredly, according unto it, a man shall stand or fall at the last."—Letter of Mr. *Hales* to Abp. *Laud*.

Next to officiating and administering in forms of worship contrary to the sense of their own minds, and invoking those whom they believe not to be gods, or capable of hearing and helping them ; near of kin to this, and not much inferior surely is the fault of joining in worship directed to such objects, and thereby giving sanction and encouragement to it. Your first apprehensions, I am persuaded, would lead you to think that no good mind could be easy in such a customary practice ; although many such there have been, and are, who can bring themselves to be satisfied with it, through the force of habit, and from various reasons, and particularly by supposing, that as the wrong part of the worship is not their act, they may safely join in the parts they approve, and have nothing to do with the others. But whether this be a conduct strictly upright, and what a christian ought to acquiesce in, as agreeable with his divine master's teachings, deserves your maturest consideration.

It is not therefore impertinently, or without just cause, that Dr. Priestley has taken
upon

upon him the office of a monitor, and, if I may be allowed so to speak, of a tutor to you, on the present occasion.

He hereby does no more than discharge the duty which one man owes to another, and I promise myself that I shall have you agreeing in sentiment with me. But whether *another person*, who has condemned him so highly in this matter, has acted a candid and wise part towards him and you, we are next to examine.

Of the Undergraduate's letter to Dr.

Priestley.

It was no unpleasing circumstance to observe in this letter, that Dr. Priestley's address to you had gained some degree of attention, and was likely to gain more. Such a curious device, so speedily put in execution, without any argument, and merely in the way of drollery, to deter you from looking into his writings, betrayed great apprehensions lest you might be inclined to peruse them; especially when it was by no means clear from the first, that the letter originated with you. For though the writer some-
times

times passes himself off tolerably well in that respect as one of you, his manner of defending the cause he espouses, discovers the strong bias and prepossessions of an older head too much, to make the deception natural.

It soon began therefore to be whispered about, that under the humble name of undergraduate lay concealed a person of eminence in the university, and the rumour soon grew into a very general persuasion, which no one that I can find calls in question, that it was the composition of no less a person than the learned president of Magdalen college, and dean of Canterbury; who, by a very venial artifice and anachronism, chose to make himself pass for one of you, as he formerly had been such, the better to answer his purpose. And though the tendency of his work be to shut you up in darkness, and ignorance of a subject of all others the most important, all your lives; yet I conceive him to have written from a pure design of serving you, and of promoting what he apprehends to be right. For his general character and practice bespeak him

him a good man, and it appears very particularly from his other publications, that he is not only a sincere believer in, but a worshiper of Jesus Christ as God Almighty, and this in an extraordinary manner, beyond many : and therefore, not to mention other subjects of wide difference, he must be greatly hurt with, and to the utmost of his power endeavour to turn you away from writings, whose aim is to prove from scripture, and the testimony of Christ himself and his apostles, and the general persuasion of christians in the earliest ages, that our Lord was only a most virtuous and excellent creature, the messenger and prophet of the most high and only true God, a mortal man of the nation of the jews, and family of Abraham and David.

The doctrine embraced, and pleaded for, by Dr. Horne, being not taught in the bible, as has been often shewn, and will be seen hereafter in this work ; yet being drawn in almost with your first breath (of which I may speak from some experience) from nurses, parents, creeds, catechisms ; inculcated daily in prayers, public and private ;

vate; bound upon you afterwards by a subscription to articles of faith, framed by ignorant and fallible men, by whose decisions nevertheless you are to abide and to interpret the scripture itself by them, so that all avenues of free inquiry into its meaning are shut up: under such early impressions and influence, it must have been with great pains and difficulty that any have emancipated themselves, and come at the truth in this point.

That these setters which are now in youth comparatively light upon your minds, may be taken off; and particularly, that you may be enabled to form some judgment purely your own, when you bend your knees in prayer, whether you are to address yourselves to *three eternal, almighty persons*, or to *one such person* only; Dr. Priestley directed his first letters to you, at the close of those inscribed to the dean of Canterbury, composed in a strain of good sense, piety and benevolence, justly admired; and now again, at the instant I am writing, he has shewn the weakness of the arguments, which the same worthy person under his feigned name of
Undergraduate,

Undergraduate, had advanced, in reply to him, and in plea for your remaining under these chains of subscription for ever. It will be my task to acquaint you with the defective accounts, and misrepresentation of many things, which this your pretended brother-undergraduate's prejudices have led him into, such as I do not find noticed by Dr. Priestley.

SECTION II.

Subscription to the creeds and articles of the church, a grievance long complained of. Archbp. Tillotson's wish concerning Athanasius's creed. Curious history of a contrary temper in the present day. Of Mr. Locke's sentiments. Of Dr. Clarke's. Of Mr. Whiston's. The candid disquisitions. The clerical petitioners at the Feathers. Clerical assembly at Tennison's library. Of Dr. Durell's sentiments. Of Bp. Lowth's.

NOTHING is more difficult than to assume a character that belongs not to us,
and

and act consistently in it. In Dr. Horne's letter drawn up for you, we find many things at your time of life, never likely to have entered into your thoughts; particularly, the mystic notion, p. 40, that the epistle to the Hebrews is a divine exposition of the Old Testament. We also perceive not in the author, that curiosity, and ardent thirst after and love of truth, which belong to the human mind in the early prime of life: but, what is most unnatural to that age, a fixed resolution to make no inquiry into subjects of the highest moment, but to sit down lazy and satisfied with what others, without any just pretensions, have decided concerning them, before he was born.

By writing however in the character of a young disputant, he has a plausible excuse for passing over a circumstance, with which you ought by no means to be unacquainted; which is, that however he pleads for subscription to creeds and articles, and will not admit the idea of any alteration or relaxation, a reformation therein has from the first, more particularly of late, been desired
and

and fought for by some of the wisest and best men of the nation.

To touch only upon some things that have fallen out within a century past.

Archbishop Tillotson writes from Lambeth to Bp. Burnet, in 1694, upon reading his exposition of the 39 articles :

“ In the article of the Trinity, you have
 “ said all that I think can be said, upon *so*
 “ *obscure and difficult an argument.* The
 “ Socinians have just now published an
 “ answer to us all; but I have not had a
 “ sight of it.—*The account given of Athana-*
 “ *sus's creed seems to me no-wise satisfactory.*
 “ *I wish we were well rid of it.*” Life of
 Tillotson by Birch, 8vo. p. 342. 343.

It is a great misfortune not to do right things, and give up what is wrong and indefensible, at the time, as soon as perceived, especially in religious matters; because doctrines the most groundless and irrational, when stamped by authority, soon grow to be received without examination as the most sacred truths; and reformation,
 from

from various causes, becomes the more difficult, the longer it is delayed.

Thus the suspected text, 1 John v. 7. which was marked out as such in our english bibles, at the time of the reformation, and whose spuriousness has been more and more evinced since that period to the present day, by the critical inquiries of learned men, is, nevertheless, in the face of all the demonstration of its not having been of the writing of the apostle that the subject is capable of, now asserted to be genuine, with a temper and spirit and by a method of argument, which certainly does no credit to the writer, or the cause he would maintain. For this I would refer all that are judges, to Mr. Travis's own work, or to a Gleaning of remarks upon it, at the end of vol. 1, of "Commentaries and Essays, published by the Society for promoting the knowledge of the Scriptures, 1786."

And yet, on this gentleman's hardy assertions, devoid of all proof, bishop Seabury has lately proclaimed this exploded text to be authentic, throughout America, as far as his

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feeble

feeble voice and little authority can go, in a charge delivered by him at Derby in the State of Connecticut, September 1786.

" I am not ignorant, says he, p. 10. that
 " the authenticity of 1 John v. 7. is dis-
 " puted. Nor am I ignorant that it has
 " been *incontestably* established by the Rev.
 " Mr. Travis, in his letters to Mr. Gibbon."

Dr. Croft also, p. 80. and Mr. Hawkins, p. 188. the two last Bampton-Lecturers, have sent their readers to Mr. Travis, as " hav-
 " ing evinced the genuineness of the text to
 " the intire satisfaction of every candid
 " and impartial inquirer." Ye will judge for yourselves, ye virtuous youth and searchers after truth, whether these gentlemen have not been too soon and easily satisfied.†

Thus also the following history of recent facts will shew, in what different estimation this creed of Athanasius is held by some in high places in the church, than it was in Tillotson's days, by him, and others: and

† especially after having read *Person* ^{this,}

this, even after it has been still more clearly demonstrated not to have been composed by Athanasius, but drawn up long after his time, and put out under his name, most probably by one Vigilus Tapsensis; the same who first cited the spurious text of 1 John v. 7, as genuine; one who accustomed himself to put the names of learned men of former times to his works, and pass them off as their's; a practice, whatever his motive was for it, most highly to be condemned, tending to throw confusion into history, and to prevent our coming at certainty about any persons or things in former ages.

Soon after the separation of the American States from the mother-country, in the year 1785, a liturgy was published at Boston in New England, for the use of the first episcopal church in that city, in which the plan of Dr. Clarke's reformed liturgy was adopted, and the worship made strictly unitarian, being addressed throughout to the One Almighty Father of all through Jesus Christ. In this, however,

only one congregation was immediately concerned.

But in consequence of a general meeting for the purpose, in the same year, there came out, *The book of Common Prayer. and Administration of the Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies*, as revised and proposed to the use of the protestant episcopal church, at a convention of the said church in the states of NEW-YORK, NEW-JERSEY, PENNSILVANIA, DELAWARE, MARYLAND, VIRGINIA, and SOUTH-CAROLINA, held in Philadelphia, from September 27th to October 7th, 1785. Philadelphia, printed 1786.

Considering the attachment of many to old forms, and the strenuous efforts now used to preserve a steady adherence to them, there was a commendable amendment of them made at this time; though it fell short of the wishes and endeavours of not a few among them, especially with respect to the article of worship. For I am well informed, that there was a motion made in the convention, for an alteration in the litany,

litany, and particularly for retaining only the first invocation, and removing the three others, namely, those to *God the Son*, *God the Holy Ghost*, and *the holy and blessed Trinity*.

In their preface, they have commendably inserted the different articles proposed for a review by King William's ecclesiastical commissioners in 1689, among whom were those excellent men, Tillotson, Burnet, Patrick, Tennison, &c.

Two of the articles therein mentioned, to be reviewed, by those eminent men, were,

“ *Whether the ATHANASIAN CREED may*
 “ *not, consistently with piety, faith and cha-*
 “ *rity, be either wholly omitted, or left indif-*
 “ *ferent in itself?*”

“ *Whether the articles of religion may*
 “ *not deserve a review ; and the subscrip-*
 “ *tion to them and the common prayer, be*
 “ *contrived, after some manner, less excep-*
 “ *tionable than at present ?*”

But this american assembly did not stop here, and content themselves with mere

words and declarations. The 39 articles they reduced to 20.

They excluded not only the creed of Athanasius so called, but the Nicene creed also.

In the apostles' creed, they omit the clause of Christ's *descent into hell*; for which they assign the following reason: "This clause, as Bp. Burnet, Bp. Pearson, and other writers inform us, is found in no creed, nor mentioned by any writer, until about the 5th century; and in the first creeds that have this clause or article, that of Christ's *burial* not being mentioned in them, it follows that they understood the descent into *hell* only of his burial or descent into the grave, as the word is otherwise translated in the bible. The Nicene creed hath only the burial, and the Athanasian only the descent into hell."

You will judge, whether the history of what follows, with respect to this american episcopal liturgy, tells to the credit of those who were concerned in some counter-reformations,

mations, may I not stile them, that were attempted, and some that were actually made in it.

In the first convention of the protestant episcopal church, held in Philadelphia, from Sept. 27 to Oct. 7, 1785, it was resolved to
“ address the archbishops and bishops of
“ the church of England, requesting them
“ to confer the episcopal character, on
“ such persons as shall be chosen and re-
“ commended to them for that purpose,
“ from the conventions of their church,
“ in their respective states.”

In their second convention, held also at the city of Philadelphia in June, 1786, a letter was read from the Archbishops and Bishops of the church of England, notifying their approbation of the address made to them, and desire of complying with the prayer of their address, but expressing some hesitation on account of a report of alterations adopted, or intended in the american liturgy; “ lest they should be the instru-
“ ments of establishing an ecclesiastical
“ system, which will be called a branch of
“ the church of England, but afterwards

“ may possibly appear to have departed
“ from it essentially, either in doctrine or in
“ discipline.”

In their next convention, held at Wilmington in Delaware, Oct. 1786, there was read a letter from the archbishops of Canterbury and York, in which, after having mentioned their having received their American Common-prayer-book, &c. they express themselves in these words; “ The
“ whole of your communications was then,
“ with as little delay as possible, taken into
“ consideration, at a meeting of the arch-
“ bishops and fifteen of the bishops, being
“ all who were then in London, and able
“ to attend; and it was impossible not to
“ observe with concern, that, if the essen-
“ tial doctrines of our common faith were
“ retained, less respect however was paid
“ to our liturgy than its own excellence,
“ and your declared attachment to it, had
“ led us to expect; not to mention a
“ variety of verbal alterations, of the ne-
“ cessity or propriety of which we are by
“ no means satisfied; we saw with grief,
“ that two of the confessions of our chris-
“ tian

“ tian faith, respectable for their antiquity,
“ have been intirely laid aside ; and that
“ even in that which is called the apos-
“ tles’ creed, an article is omitted, which
“ was thought necessary to be inserted,
“ with a view to a particular heresy, in a
“ very early age of the church, and has
“ ever since had the venerable sanction of
“ universal reception.”

A little after, in the course of their letter, resuming the subject, they say ;

“ We therefore most earnestly exhort
“ you, that you restore to its integrity the
“ apostles’ creed, in which you have omit-
“ ted an article merely, as it seems, from
“ misrepresentation of the sense in which
“ it is understood by our church ; nor can
“ we help adding, that we hope you will
“ think it but a decent proof of the at-
“ tachment which you profess to the ser-
“ vices of our liturgy, to give to the other
“ two creeds a place in your book of com-
“ mon prayer, even though the use of them
“ should be left discretionary.”

The above accounts are taken from the journals of the different conventions, printed

at

at Philadelphia. In what follows, concerning this last convention at Wilmington, we are informed, that it was unanimously agreed to comply with the desire of the english bishops, by re-admitting the Nicene creed into their american liturgy, but that it should be at the option of the minister, to read that or the apostles' creed. The restoration however of the creed of Athanasius, so called, to its place, was unanimously negatived by three of the states, and by a majority of the other two. But Christ's *descent into hell* was again adopted and received into the apostles' creed, though not without some negative voices; and the others might perhaps satisfy themselves with having declared publicly the sense they gave it, as equivalent to his being put into the grave, or buried.

O ye *Tillotsons, Patricks, Burnets, Tennysons*, could ye have been now recalled from your long quiet (*a*) repose in the grave,
where

(*a*) I never read but with great dislike, the hackneyed inscription on hatchments, which presents itself so often to our eyes in the streets of this metropolis; *In cælo quies, in heaven rest*; whereas in truth it should be reversed, *sub terra*

where Christ your master was suffered to remain only three days, how different a part would ye have acted ! To how much wider

terra quies, in cælo vita, in the grave rest, in heaven life ; for surely no dull repose is to be expected there. And though such sort of things, I apprehend, are commonly left to undertakers, who follow a beaten road, without much distinction, I must confess I was particularly pleased to see over Savile-house, after its master, the late Sir George Savile, had quitted it and all earthly things, a hatchment with that fine bold christian motto, *Resurgam, I shall rise again*, which none but the christian can say with confidence. And it truly belonged to him, as a christian ; for such he was, taking a latitude in many things to think for himself, as I believe all do that think at all on the subject. I remember hearing him once express himself with disapprobation (that gentleman will pardon me) of Mr. Gibbon's unfair way of attacking christianity in the guise of a pretended friend, instead of coming forth openly against what he esteemed to be wrong. He was withal the most benevolent of men, leaving himself at last scarce a competency out of his vast fortunes, through his unbounded zeal to serve his friends, his relations, his country, and mankind. Of an integrity the most uncorrupted, but so well known, that it is almost an injury to him to name it ; and, which crowns the rational virtuous character, worshipping with profoundest reverence the one only living and true God, and parent of the universe. Some little testimony I could bear in these respects, from the year

wider a compass would ye have pleaded for your *ecclesiastical commission* to be extended, had ye enjoyed those lights concerning the equal rights of men, and the incompetency of human authority in the things of religion, with which the world hath been blest since your time, by the labours of Locke, Hoadley, Blackburne, Law, all these now, and some very lately, gathered to the same silent mansions with yourselves, waiting the resurrection-day!

It may be useful to subjoin a remark on the above american business, together with a short account of another transaction in that country in some connection with it; as the whole will contribute to give you clear ideas on an ecclesiastical subject, commonly involved in much darkness.

To a mind in any due degree enlightened by a proper use of its reasoning powers, and by the study of the scriptures themselves, it must appear the result of a strange superstition, for men, like these new american
bishops,

year 1774 to his lamented death, and am happy in paying this tribute of honour and grateful esteem to his memory,

bishops, to be sent across the Atlantic, to receive a power and authority of appointing or ordaining teachers of the gospel, which otherwise they could not have exercised with benefit or effect; and this to be conveyed to them, through the laying on of the hands of christian ministers in England, of a particular name and description, supposed to derive their peculiar privilege and power, in a regular, uninterrupted descent and succession from the apostles.

And it is a matter of wonder to many, that several large provinces of that new world, after having contended so intrepidly for their civil independency, should subject themselves to the having chains put upon their minds and consciences, the heaviest of all others, and binding them upon their posterity, by consenting particularly to the great alteration (*e*) made in their fourth article of religion, in order to engage the english bishops to consecrate the persons sent
over

(*e*) In their new common-prayer book, printed at Philadelphia, 1787, the ivth article was as follows.

“ Of the creed.

“ The creed, commonly called the *apostles'* creed, ought
to

over to them, and also by their tacit implied purpose of not deviating any farther from the doctrine and worship of the church of England, acknowledged on all hands, by very many of its own members, to stand in great need of a reformation in both these respects.

As to apostolic succession, or any virtue or powers derived from it, which the church of Rome and church of England claim, it
is

to be received and believed: because it may be proved by the holy scripture."

It was ordered to be altered as follows, in compliance with the requisition of the english bishops.

"Of the creeds.

"The two creeds, namely, that commonly called the "*apostles'* creed, and the Nicene creed, ought to be received "and believed, because they may be proved by the holy "scripture."

So that instead of a creed, which declared one person, God, the Father almighty, to be God; they have contrary to their own purpose, admitted and approved a creed, which declares *three* persons, each of them to be *very* God, and all the three equally to be worshiped and glorified. It is to be hoped, that the americans will not look upon the law that constrains them to this to be like the law of the Medes and Persians, never to be altered.

is a mere phantom, signifying nothing; which, if it could be proved to be regular and unbroken, would give no powers above what any other ministers of the gospel possess, without any such pretences. And with respect to baptism and the Lord's supper, the latter of which has been so astonishingly perverted from the simplicity of its original institution, there is no ground from the scripture, or from early antiquity, (*f*) to appropriate the ministration of these ordinances to the teachers of the gospel, save what arose from propriety and decorum, and on that account very rightly to be attended to: but that otherwise, laymen, those that were not teachers of religion, might officiate by themselves in these ordinances with equal good effect.

I doubt not therefore but that the members of the first episcopal church of Boston
in

(*e*) See this subject discussed with great learning and accuracy, in "*Bohmeri dissertationes juris ecclesiastici, particularly de coitionibus christianorum ad capiendum cibum, de jure laicorum sacerdotali, et de jure dandi baptismum.*"

in New England will be applauded and approved by all equal judges, as having exerted a proper christian spirit, and exercised only those powers which by apostolic practice and authority belong to every christian society, in ordaining Mr. Freeman, a person most deservedly chosen by them, to be their minister : and especially after they and their minister had shewn all proper deference and condescension to received order and custom, in applications to the new american bishops for Mr. Freeman to have received ordination from them, but which was not to be obtained without such submissions and declarations as the gospel of Christ condemns. And though, in their form of ordination, they have expressed, that they shall not object to Mr. Freeman's having also an episcopal ordination, it is to be hoped, that all the members of the congregation will so far overcome former prejudices, as to shew themselves superior to such weakness, in imagining, that the hand of a bishop can convey any thing to their minister, of which he is not already possessed.

The

The (g) form of the ordination I have given you in the margin. The plan of it was

(g) The exact manner in which the whole transaction passed was as follows:

November 18, 1787, after evening-prayer, the Church-wardens came into the reading-desk and having placed Mr. Freeman between them, the senior warden acquainted the congregation with the design of the meeting. A short prayer introduced the service, and then the following vote of ordination was read, voted and signed,

Boston, 18th Nov. 1787.

"Voted, that We, the Wardens, Vestry, Proprietors, and Congregation of the Chapel, or First Episcopal Church in Boston, do, by virtue of the third article of the Declaration of Rights, hereby solemnly Elect, Ordain, Constitute and Appoint, the Rev. James Freeman of said Boston, Clerk, to be our Rector, Minister, Priest, Pastor, Teaching Elder, and Public Teacher, to preach the word of God, and to dispense lessons and instructions in Piety, Religion and Morality, and to minister the holy Sacraments to the Congregation, and so to do, perform and discharge all the other duties and offices, which of right belong to any other Rector, Minister, Pastor, Teaching Elder, Public Teacher, or Priest in Orders.

And it is hereby intended and understood, that the Authority and Rights hereby given to the Rev. James Freeman, to be our Rector, Minister, Priest, Pastor, Teaching Elder, and Public Teacher, are to remain in full force so long as he shall continue to preach the word of

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God,

was suggested, I am told, by Governor Bowdoin, a member of the congregation of the
episcopal

God, and dispense instructions of Piety, Religion, and Morality conformable to our opinions and sentiments of the Holy Scriptures, and no longer, and that our judgment of his not conforming to our religious sentiments and opinions, shall be ascertained by the votes of three-fourths of the Wardens and Vestry, and of three-fourths of the Proprietors usually worshipping in said Church separately and individually taken.

Signed,

Thomas Bulfinch, } Wardens.
Shrimpton Hutchinson, }

In behalf of ourselves, and the vestry,
and a majority of the proprietors
and congregation of the chapel, or
first episcopal church in Boston.

After the vote of ordination the following was passed:

“ And it is further voted that if at any time hereafter, Ordination by the imposition of hands from a bishop in common and usual form can be procured for Mr. Freeman, without sacrificing our own religious sentiments to those of others, we will adopt that method, in confirmation of the present mode of ordination. Mr. F. then signified his acceptance of the election and ordination, and that he believed it to be apostolic and valid. After which the senior warden declared him duly ordained and “ whilst in a
‘ most interesting manner, he exhorted him to do his
‘ duty

episcopal chapel, a gentleman of learning, and great merit. And I am also informed, that many distinguished characters in that part of the world, to whom the plan was communicated, before it was put in practice, expressed their intire approbation of it. They considered it as a revival of the sentiments which prevailed in the churches of that country, at its first settlement. In the New England platform of church discipline, published by a synod, in the year 1684, it is said ; “ Ordination, we account nothing
“ else, but the solemn putting of a man into
“ his place and office in the church, where-
“ unto he had right before by election ;
“ being like the installing of a magistrate
“ in the common wealth. In such churches
“ where there are no elders, imposition of
“ hands may be performed by some of
“ the brethren orderly chosen thereunto.
“ For if the people may elect officers which
“ is the greater, and wherein the substance

D 2

“ of

• duty with fidelity, he laid one hand upon him, and with
• the other delivered him the bible, injoining him to make
• that sacred book the rule of his faith and conduct. Then
• followed prayer and a blessing.’

“ of the office doth consist, they may much
“ more (occasion and need so requiring)
“ impose hands in ordination, which is less,
“ and but the accomplishment of the
“ other.”

Every lover of learning, piety, and truth,
will rise at the name of *Locke*, the honour
of our country, and of your university in
particular, ye sons of *Ihs*! however unjustly
expelled from his place among you, in try-
ing times, by arbitrary power.

In your studious, shady walks, and groves,
oft visited and made sacred by him, he me-
ditated and planned his first immortal work;
in which, with thought profound, he ex-
plored and delineated, the principles, and
elements of human knowlege, and how
best to conduct the mind in the search and
attainment of truth.

Nor did he more excell in thus investigat-
ing, and teaching the use of our natural rea-
soning powers, than in descrying, and point-
ing out the proper application of them, to the
right

right understanding of the written records of divine revelation, of which he was a firm believer. Of his admirable skill herein, his preface to some of St. Paul's epistles, and commentaries and notes upon them, are a noble monument.

In religious opinion he was strictly unitarian; holding the supreme, omnipotent Father to be God alone, and no other person besides him.

What he thought at large, concerning the imposition of creeds, and articles of faith, by human authority, is seen in his "Letters on toleration;" and you may gather it particularly, from his "Reasonableness of christianity, as contained in the scriptures." In which admirable tract, he advances and proves this point, *viz.* *that Christ and his apostles, did not propound any article as necessarily to be believed to make a man a christian, but this; that JESUS IS THE CHRIST, or the Messias.* No one therefore hath any right or title to impose the belief of any other article as necessary to christian communion, or man's final salvation, than Christ required.

In this treatise also, amidst other things, Mr. Locke asserts and demonstrates, that the phrase, *Son of God*, in the New Testament, applied to our Saviour, signifies nothing more than *the Christ*, or the Messiah.

And this I would observe by the way, may teach you, what judgment to form of those very learned persons, who will have Christ to be the Son of God, as Dr. Clarke says, (Serm. vol. v. p. 30, 8vo.) “on account of deriving his being from the
“ Father, in a singular and incomprehensible manner, before the world was :” or, as Bp. Pearson on the creed, (p. 142. 1683) and others maintain, that Christ was the Son of God, “ by a communication of
“ the divine essence to him, which was a
“ proper generation ; and that by this his
“ natural and eternal generation, Christ is
“ of the same substance, and consequently
“ of the same power and dignity with
“ God.” Common sense rejects the idea of a Son of God, (that is, one, who, by the very terms, derives his being from him) becoming equal in power and dignity to
HIM,

HIM, from whom he received his being. And the holy scriptures acknowlege no such *Son of God* as this, so derived ; nor happily do they deal in such dark unintelligible language, as *proper generations, eternal generations and communications of the divine essence*, as the way, strange to speak, in the which persons are made Gods, equal to the supreme Father of all.

Great allowance should be made for those, who by taking up a wrong system concerning Jesus Christ, or through the illusions of science falsely so called, involve themselves in a cloud of words without meaning. But do ye always keep sight of scripture, and use no words but such as you, and every plowman, and drayman, can equally understand ! For most assuredly, Christ and his apostles, intended to be understood by such, as well as by Cambridge and Oxford scholars.

How far soever the famous Rector of St. James's, the virtuous, learned, and able Dr. Clarke, misled by some of the early christian

writers, exalted the character of Jesus Christ, beyond what the scriptures make him; yet he always contended for the divine unity as a point the most sacred; that the Father was the only true God, and object of religious worship.

The amendments, which he earnestly wished to have taken place in the liturgy of the church of England, are exactly conformable to this idea. This appears from his *Reformed Common-prayer-book*, in which such amendments are marked in his own hand-writing; which was given by his son, the late Mr. Clarke, to the British Museum, and is there preserved. All the direct addresses to Christ and the holy ghost, are blotted out by him: and such only reserved and allowed, where God, the Father only is invoked and adored.

What Mr. Emlyn has preserved of his sentiments on the present subject, with whom he appears to have lived in great intimacy the latter part of his life, is too much deserving your attention not to be transcribed at large.

It

It was on the prospect of Dr. Clarke being to be raised to the see of Canterbury, that Mr. Emlyn had an interview with him, of which he gives the following relation.

“ Some time, says he, in November
‘ 1727, Dr. Clarke wrote to me in a familiar letter, *that he had a great mind to*
‘ *talk with me*, if I could come any morning, but *Saturday*. Accordingly within two
‘ or three days I went to him, and we
‘ talked more freely and closely of these
‘ matters. We soberly and fairly considered
‘ what difficulties and just objections might
‘ lie in his way, on the supposal of his
‘ being offered such ecclesiastical dignity.
‘ For I must say, that he ever seemed to me,
‘ seriously concerned not to violate his conscience for any preferment, nor to run
‘ rashly into great snares; nor did I ever
‘ know any man more ready to hear, with
‘ all the ease and calmness possible, what
‘ might be in reason opposed. He never
‘ intended, by any means, to be taken off
‘ from professing and defending what he
‘ believed to be the *great truths* of the gospel.
‘ pel.

‘ pel, and in particular said, he intended
‘ to print a new edition of his *Scripture-*
‘ *doctrine*, &c. with some additions.

‘ The greatest difficulty which occurred,
‘ as I remember, was the business of *ordi-*
‘ *nation* of priests, and deacons. Some things
‘ in the prescribed form he did not ap-
‘ prove, and could not use; particularly, the
‘ hymn, *Come Holy Ghost, eternal God*, &c.
‘ but there being liberty to use another
‘ hymn, this did not press; some other
‘ matters I objected to, which did not stick
‘ with him. But the grand objection of all
‘ was, the requiring the persons to be or-
‘ dained, to *subscribe the articles*, according to
‘ *canon 36*. He said, it would be evil for
‘ him to require them to do, what he
‘ would not judge fit to do himself, or to
‘ that effect; which I thought to be a just
‘ reflection. But I observed to him, that
‘ although if a suffragan bishop ordained
‘ any without taking that subscription, he
‘ might be suspended from giving orders for
‘ one year, by his metropolitan, yet by
‘ that canon, no penalty was incurred by
‘ the metropolitan himself. However as
the

‘ the persons ordained could not enjoy any
 ‘ benefice, without such subscription, and
 ‘ might legally claim it; I thought he
 ‘ ought plainly to tell them, that he no
 ‘ way encouraged them to subscribe, nor
 ‘ did he approve of it, but yet if themselves
 ‘ were satisfied in their own minds that
 ‘ they could safely do it, he should not bar
 ‘ them of their liberty therein. To which
 ‘ the Doctor answered, *Nay, I would tell*
 ‘ *them further, that I had not accepted pre-*
 ‘ *ferment myself for that very reason, and that*
 ‘ *if it were in my power, I would have it*
 ‘ *taken away.*”—Emlyn’s works, vol. ii.
 p. 493.

From this narrative, it may deserve to be
 remarked; that the first princes of the
 house of Hanover, George I. and George II.
 and his royal consort, the patrons of this
 learned and worthy divine, shewed extraor-
 dinary favour towards him, although he
 was known to be an Arian, i. e. one who
 did not believe the doctrine of the Trinity.

And as these great personages had thoughts
 of advancing Dr. Clarke to the highest dig-
 nity in the church, it is probable that of
 themselves,

themselves, they would have had no objection to such alterations in the liturgy, as he was earnest and solicitous to introduce.

It is not to be expected, that princes should turn reformers: but it is a great happiness, when they do nothing to obstruct or hinder the salutary work.

The most honest and truly learned Mr. Whiston's testimony to the Divine Unity, and his sufferings for it, should be well known to you. For this I would refer you to his memoirs of his own life, written in his old age; a most edifying work, passing by some weaknesses and indiscretions very pardonable at such a period, and in the midst of such shining excellencies. You have there an account, with what zeal and labour, having given up his preferments for the gospel's sake, and a pensioner on the bounties of others, this apostolic man spent the last forty years of his life, in travelling about from place to place, and bearing testimony against the imposition of subscrip-
tion

tion to human articles of faith, as a snare to good minds only; and in endeavours to induce the governors of the church to render the liturgy a scriptural worship, i. e. unitarian; to correct the doxologies, to omit the creed called the *Albanasian*, and several clauses in that called the *Nicene*, to reform the first petitions in the liturgy, with the direction of the rest to God, the supreme Father of all.

Somewhat less than forty years ago were published, “ Free and candid disquisitions, relating to the church of England, and the means of advancing religion therein, addressed to the governing powers in church and state, and more immediately to the two houses of convocation.”

In this design were embarked some persons of the laity of great learning, and worth, and some highly estimable clerical characters: but we have never yet been made acquainted with their names.

Never

Never could any more reasonable or moderate proposals have been made for a redress of things amiss. The point of subscription was particularly considered, and modest mention made of its being the opinion of some among them, (*b*) that one article, out of the thirty-nine, would be sufficient to all the real and useful purposes of subscription, *viz.* the sixth. I remember at the time, that in one of our universities, there was a general disposition in the younger part of it's members, to favour these disquisitions, and an expectation that some reformation would have taken place in consequence of them.

About

(*b*) Free and candid disquisitions, p. 163. note. The sixth article is, this :

Of the sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for salvation.

" Holy scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatever is not read therein, nor may
 " be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man,
 " that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or
 " be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the
 " name of the holy scripture we do understand those
 " canonical books of the Old and New Testament, of
 " whose authority was never any doubt in the church.

About 20 years afterwards, in 1771, a number of serious members of the church of England became persuaded, that more active measures to obtain the desired reformation were to be pursued, and joined in a scheme for petitioning the legislature for relief in the matter of subscription to the 39 articles and liturgy of the church of England, and many respectable persons in different parts of the kingdom united with them in their application to parliament, and set their names to the petition.

Their cause was so well argued and defended in the Commons' house of parliament, by some of its most illustrious members; and so many appeared for it, that though unsuccessful by the majority of votes against it, it was truly triumphant; and the nation in general became convinced, that it was just and reasonable, and deserved to be listened to and encouraged (*i*). And
from

(*i*) In the works of Dr. Jebb, lately so well exhibited to the public, may be seen some memorials of what passed at the time, with many important observations, which may be of signal use upon any future application.

from that day may be dated the general disposition towards a reformation in our ecclesiastical system throughout the country, and also for an amendment in the forms of public worship; which last has been more apparent since, and now much prevails. Although the leading clergy seem to have taken a contrary ply, as is but too evident from the american transaction relating to the creed of Athanasius above-mentioned, and from (k) the sermon on *the duty of contending*

(k) Dr. Horne, in a note to this sermon, p. 17, recommends Mr. Leslie's writings, as an antidote to the opinions of the focinians, or unitarians. Together with them, I could wish you to read three short tracts of Mr. Emlyn's, which are placed at the beginning of the second volume of his works, viz.

1. Remarks on Mr. Charles Leslie's last dialogue, on the focinian controversy.
2. A vindication of the remarks, &c.
3. An examination of Mr. Charles Leslie's last dialogue, relating to the *satisfaction* of Christ.

For strength and acuteness of reasoning, and just interpretation of scripture, you will meet with few equal to this candid and eminent writer.

To another part of his sermon, p. 20, Dr. Horne also subjoins this note; "An excellent little tract was printed for Rivington, in 1774. I wish 20,000 of these were
" dispersed

contending for the faith, i. e. the doctrine of the trinity, (with a discourse on the *trinity in unity* annexed) preached by the president of Magdalen, in his place as dean of Canterbury, before the present archbishop on his primary visitation, with large approbation; and now last, from the letter of an undergraduate to Dr. Priestley, by the same hands, the better to induce you to acquiesce in things as they are, and to prevent making any examination yourselves.

It is a vain thought to expect, by such weak attempts, to lay asleep the spirit of free inquiry into the scriptures, which has begun to be awakened among you, and in the nation at large; and that all murmur
and

“ dispersed through the kingdom, at this time. It was intitled, *A preservative against the publications dispersed by modern socinians; in which the impiety and absurdity of their principles are clearly shewn; addressed by a country clergyman to his parishioners.*”

Concerning this piece so highly commended, I should cheerfully submit it to any rational inquirer to determine, whether it does not rather tend to recommend the persons and the doctrine, which the author opposes.

and dissatisfaction with the doctrines, and forms of worship imposed by the awful and almost universal authority of ages, will be quieted and suppressed.

So did the superior ecclesiastics, at the beginning of the 16th century, in our own and other countries of this western world, exert every effort to stifle the very general cry and demand for a reformation; and fondly imagined they had accomplished the wished-for point in Leo the Xth's easy and voluptuous reign; when an obscure german monk, but of courage the most invincible, and equal piety and integrity, suddenly started from his cell, roused by some of the most glaring abuses, and profligate profanation of things sacred then carrying on under the pope's immediate order and authority; and the most outrageous opposition being made to his reasonable objections, without the least concession or redress given, he was excited to go on detecting and exposing one grievance and corruption after another, till the eyes of many provinces and kingdoms were opened, and threw off the papal yoke: happy would it have been, if they
had

had not all of them imposed another of their own, which in time has turned out most grievous to be borne; and which I am sorry to note, your supposed brother undergraduate seeks to bind upon you for ever.

The *clerical petitioners*, who had their meeting at the Feathers' tavern, Strand, gave their reasons to the public, why they judged it more expedient, and preferable, to apply to the legislature for relief, rather than to the bishops alone.

But there was *another clerical assembly* at the time, composed of a different set of men, who met at Tennison's library near the Mews, with a view, as they express themselves, "to request a revival of the
" articles and liturgy, and forms of sub-
" scription; but judged it fitting to con-
" sult first their spiritual superiors, and to
" be directed by them.

" Upon application to the archbishop of
" Canterbury, (Dr. Cornwallis) he replied
" in terms of candour to their intentions,

“ and that he would lay their wishes before
“ his brethren.”

The small sheet of paper in my possession, whence the above is taken, was printed and circulated *to inform the clergy* (who had joined in great numbers with the leaders in this application to the bishops,) *what had been done; and that they might not suppose the matter wholly dropped, while it remained suspended.* It is dated, December, 1772.

Some of the principal gentlemen concerned in this association to procure a revival of the articles, liturgy, and forms of subscription of the church of England, now fill very high stations in it; viz. Dr. Porteus, lately moved to the see of London; Dr. Yorke, Bp. of Ely, Dr. Percy, Bp. of Dromore, in Ireland; and probably others, who may be unknown to me as having taken any part in it.

It is obvious for you here to remark, those among you particularly who are candidates for the sacred ministry, how different the president of Magdalen's sentiments of the church of England are, from those entertained by these his now spiritual superiors.

He

He is for having you to subscribe to and acquiesce for life in things as they are now established, and prohibits all inquiry by condemning every thought of any alteration in any respect, (1) unless it first occur to, and be put in execution by the governors of the church. But *these gentlemen* have, by their example, pointed out to you, may I not say, that it is *your duty*, to examine your creeds and articles, and the nature of your subscription to them, how far right and justifiable; and have declared, that an amendment is needed in your articles, liturgy, and forms of subscription. And as it would be an injury to them, to suppose that their sentiments on these points are contrary to what they published them a few years ago, you may reasonably expect, that they will not let the matter be wholly dropped; and that something will be attempted by them, of what good men have

E 3

long

(1) 'If the compilers were mistaken in an article of *the thirty-nine*, it is incumbent on our governors, when convinced of such mistake, to alter or expunge that article.' Letter to Dr. Priestley, by an undergraduate, p. 27.

long expected in these matters, for the honour of religion, and the ease of honest minds. Nor can it be supposed, that they would now allege, that the state of things is altered from what it was, and the creeds and articles and subscriptions of the church, discovered to be no grievance at all. The reverse of this is unquestionably the truth. From the free discussion which these matters have undergone for these fifteen years past, the unreasonableness of many things, to which you are called to subscribe and to conform, hath more appeared, and their contradiction to the scriptures, the only standard of doctrine and worship, been still more convincingly demonstrated.

A learned person of rank in the university of Oxford, a very few years ago, after giving the strongest arguments for a new version of our english bible, with great good sense recommends, that “ acts of that nature done
“ by authority, in which are included liturgies or public forms of worship, should be
“ revised at the distance of half a century,
“ to

“ to take off the almost sacred veneration
“ the people have for things, which not
“ their merit, but antiquity alone has conse-
“ crated. But foreseeing, that some would
object to a plan of this kind, from an apprehension that an eagerness for reformation might in such cases carry matters to too great a length; he states the objection and answers it himself.

“ Would the innovator,” he puts it,
“ herewith rest, satisfied! would he not de-
“ fire after this a revival of the liturgy,
“ with the xxxix articles; and proceed
“ from ecclesiastical, to civil matters? These
“ are not necessary,” replies he to the ob-
jector, “ perhaps not probable conse-
“ quences: but allowing they were; what
“ nobler object could the parliament, could
“ the convocation have under their con-
“ templation, than the petitions of serious
“ and well-disposed men; presented, at
“ proper intervals, with becoming humility,
“ praying, not to be released (as in a late
“ instance) from the bonds by which so-
“ ciety is united, but that means might be
“ devised, the most efficacious, for quieting
E 4 “ their

“ their conscientious scruples, and setting
 “ them forward in the way of religious
 “ improvement?”—Critical remarks on the
 books of Job, Proverbs, Psalms, Ecclesiastes,
 and Canticles; pref. p. ix. by *Dr. Durell*,
 D.D. principal of Hertford college, and
 prebendary of Canterbury, 1772.

The same valuable and liberal author, in
 p. 180. of this work, speaking of the curses
 uttered against enemies, sometimes to be
 met with in the book of Psalms, makes this
 remark.

“ How far it may be proper to continue
 “ the reading of these psalms in the daily
 “ service of our church, I leave to the con-
 “ sideration of the legislature to determine.
 “ A christian of erudition may consider
 “ these imprecations only as the natural
 “ sentiments of jews, which the benign re-
 “ ligion he professes, abhors and condemns.
 “ But what are the illiterate to do, who
 “ know not where to draw the line between
 “ the law and the gospel? They hear both
 “ read, one after the other, and, I fear, too
 “ often think them both of equal obliga-
 “ tion; and even take shelter under scripture
 “ to

“ to cover their curses. Though I am con-
 “ scious I here tread on slippery ground, I
 “ will take leave to hint, that notwith-
 “ standing the high antiquity that sanctifies
 “ as it were this practice; it would, in the
 “ opinion of a number of wise and good
 “ men, be more for the credit of the chris-
 “ tian church, to omit a few of those psalms,
 “ and to substitute some parts of the gos-
 “ pel in their stead. See *Les sentimens des*
 “ *theologiens de Hollande*; attributed to Le
 “ Clerc in his younger days.”

It is worthy of your notice that this ju-
 dicious writer, lately taken away from this
 world, where he filled his honourable station
 so usefully, was of opinion, that many
 might have conscientious scruples with re-
 spect to some things in the articles and li-
 turgy of the church of England, and find
 them a bar to religious improvement; and
 that he not only recommends a becoming
 and modest application to governors for re-
 lief in such cases, but intimates, that it is
 the duty, and for the honour of the legisla-
 ture, to listen and attend to such petitioners.

‘LET

‘LET no one lightly entertain suspicions
 ‘ of any serious proposal for the advance-
 ‘ ment of religious knowlege; nor, out
 ‘ of unreasonable prejudice, endeavour to
 ‘ obstruct any inquiry, that professes to aim
 ‘ at the further illustration of the great
 ‘ scheme of the gospel in general, or the
 ‘ removal of error in any part, in *doctrine*,
 ‘ in practice, or in *worship*. *An opinion is*
 ‘ *not therefore false, because it contradicts re-*
 ‘ *ceived notions: but whether true or false,*
 ‘ *let it be submitted to a fair examination;*
 ‘ *truth must in the end be a gainer by it, and*
 ‘ *appear with the greater evidence.* Where
 ‘ freedom of inquiry is maintained under
 ‘ the direction of the sincere word of God,
 ‘ falsehood may perhaps triumph for a day;
 ‘ but to-morrow truth will certainly pre-
 ‘ vail, and every succeeding day will confirm
 ‘ her superiority.’—Bp. *Lowth*’s visitation
 sermon, preached at Durham, 1758.

Thus, 30 years ago, did this fine writer,
 and eminent divine, plead Dr. Priestley’s
 cause against his adversaries, and reprobate
 the practice and the little arts used by
 Dr. Horne, who is for having you to
 con-

condemn him unheard, and seeks to prejudice you against his opinions by mere declamation, and expressions of astonishment and dislike, instead of bringing them to the test of scripture, as Bp. Lowth recommends, whether they be true or false.

And so far was this learned man from presuming, that all things relating to the doctrine and worship of the church of England were right, that he invites all its members to examine for themselves whether they are so, and bids them take care, that, through unreasonable prejudices, they do not obstruct any inquiry, that aims at the removal of error in any point, in doctrine, in practice, or in worship.

And thus have you seen, that not only this prelate lately deceased, but his present successor in the see of London, and another also high on the episcopal bench, together with other learned and approved writers of the church of England, all agree in declaring that a revival of her creeds, articles and forms of worship is much wanted, and that it is the duty of all to inquire how far they are agreeable to the word of God; which is
nothing

nothing more than Dr. Priestley has recommended to you, before you blindly subscribe to them, and solemnly declare them to be true and agreeable to the scriptures.

Whether Dr. Horne acted a fair part towards you, in assuming a character as being one of your own class, which might give him a plausible colour and sanction for hiding such necessary information upon the subject from you, belongs to you to consider.

SECTION III.

Of Dr. Priestley's character, as a philosopher, and theologian.

THE president of Magdalen, at the end of the letter, in his character of undergraduate, to Dr. Priestley, passes a short compliment (m) upon

(m) "With great respect for your character as a man of science, and equal dislike to your principles, as a theologian, I am, &c.

An Undergraduate."

Oxford, April 13, 1787.

upon him, as a philosopher, though far from having raised in you, in the preceding parts, one favourable idea of him in any respect, so as to make you desirous to see any of his productions; and at the same time professes, what indeed he has not been backward to discover, a very great dislike to him as a divine.

As the ground of this dislike, which he strives to infuse into you, relates to subjects, some of them of the very highest importance, I think you interested in and request your attention to the fairer representation, which I shall endeavour to give, of the opinions of one so obnoxious to him: and making allowance for prejudice, from which few are exempt, though my earliest habits and prepossessions leaned another way; and professing obligations more than I can express, to the writings, example, and friendship of this eminent person, nevertheless, I trust you will not find my account of things far from the truth.

With all honour due, and justly due, to those learned men, whose lectures you attend, I will beg leave to say, that you may
also

also take along with you the writings of Dr. Priestley in most branches of science, and read them to advantage.

It is no small thing in his favour, to recommend him, that he is already become, may I say it, the preceptor of nations. For not only his philosophical and metaphysical, but his theological works, are sought after with avidity, and highly approved by foreigners, and several of them translated into different languages on our continent. And writings in defence of christianity, coming from such a hand, cannot fail of raising curiosity, and of contributing to remove the common presumption among unbelievers, and frequent ground of their unbelief, *viz*, that the gospel is that system of doctrines which is publicly established in each catholic and protestant state; whereas it is almost universally quite another thing, in respect both of faith, and worship.

Dr. Priestley's aim in his writings, to which all his studies tend, is to promote the glory of God, best seen and manifested in the happiness of his creatures; to discover
and

and make known his wisdom and boundless goodness, as they are exhibited to us in his revealed word, or in his glorious works abroad: for all nature is but the revelation of HIM, its great creator.

It was to these most laudable ends, that *Locke* and *Newton* consecrated their talents, and immense labours. Though it is to be lamented, that the noble family by whom the manuscript-papers of the latter have been inherited, have hitherto declined to give them to the public. Imperfect hints from a mind so penetrating might be of service. And Sir Isaac Newton is known to have applied himself in a very extraordinary manner to the study of the sacred writings, and of all ancient writers that might illustrate them. Nor are we without evidence of his having been a strict unitarian, holding God to be one person, one eternal mind, and Jesus, the creature, and servant of that God.

Our author walks in the same path with these two eminent lights, who would not have disdained to have taken him by the hand; but happily, coming after them, he devoted

devoted himself at an earlier hour, and with a much more fearless spirit than they, to study and illustrate the sacred volume, and to wipe off that polytheism and irrational superstition, which they also saw, and which for ages had disfigured it.

But you will judge better of the principles by which he has been influenced, from hearing him speak himself. In the preface to his history of Electricity, where he himself adds to the common stock of knowledge on the subject he treats of, whilst he describes what others had done before him; he thus paints the views of a true philosopher, which he has uniformly aimed to make his own, p. xvi. xvii.

‘ A philosopher ought to be something
 ‘ greater, and better than another man.
 ‘ The contemplation of the works of God
 ‘ should give a sublimity to his virtue,
 ‘ should expand his benevolence, extinguish
 ‘ every thing mean, base, and selfish in his
 ‘ nature, give a dignity to all his sentiments,
 ‘ and teach him to aspire to the moral per-
 ‘ fections of the great author of all things.
 ‘ What great and exalted beings would
 ‘ philosophers

‘ philosophers be, would they but let the
‘ objects about which they are conversant,
‘ have their proper moral effect upon
‘ their minds ! A life spent in the con-
‘ templation of the productions of divine
‘ power, wisdom, and goodness, would be
‘ a life of devotion. The more we see of
‘ the wonderful structure of the world, and
‘ the laws of nature, the more clearly do
‘ we comprehend their admirable uses, to
‘ make all the percipient creation happy ;
‘ a sentiment which cannot but fill the heart
‘ with unbounded love, gratitude and joy.

‘ Even every thing painful and disagreea-
‘ ble in the world appears to be provided,
‘ as a remedy of some other greater incon-
‘ venience, or a necessary means of a much
‘ greater happiness ; so that from this ele-
‘ vated point of view, he sees all temporary
‘ evils and inconveniences to vanish, in the
‘ glorious prospect of the great good to
‘ which they are subservient. Hence, he
‘ is able to venerate and rejoice in God,
‘ not only in the bright sunshine, but also
‘ in the darkest shades of nature, whereas

F

‘ vulgar

‘ vulgar minds are apt to be disconcerted
 ‘ with the appearance of evil.

‘ Nor is the cultivation of piety useful
 ‘ to us only as *men*, it is even useful to us as
 ‘ *philosophers*; and as true philosophy tends
 ‘ to promote piety, so a generous and man-
 ‘ ly piety is reciprocally subservient to the
 ‘ purposes of philosophy; and this both
 ‘ in a direct and indirect manner. While
 ‘ we keep in view the great final cause of
 ‘ all the parts and laws of nature, we have
 ‘ some clue by which to trace the efficient
 ‘ cause. This is most of all obvious in
 ‘ that part of philosophy which respects
 ‘ the animal creation. As the great and
 ‘ excellent Dr. Hartley observes. “ Since
 “ this world is a system of benevolence, and
 “ consequently its author the object of un-
 “ bounded love and adoration, benevolence
 “ and piety are our only true guides in our
 “ inquiries into it; the only keys that will
 “ unlock the mysteries of nature, and clues
 “ which lead through her labyrinths. Of
 “ this all branches of natural history, and
 “ natural philosophy, afford abundant in-
 “ stances.

“ In

“ In all these inquiries, let the inquirer
 “ take it for granted previously, that every
 “ thing is right, and the best that can be,
 “ *cæteris manentibus* ; that is, let him
 “ with a pious confidence seek for benevo-
 “ lent purposes, and he will be always di-
 “ rected to the right road ; and after a due
 “ continuance in it, attain to some new
 “ and valuable truth : whereas every other
 “ principle and motive of examination, be-
 “ ing foreign to the great plan on which
 “ the universe is constructed, must lead into
 “ endless mazes, errors, and perplexities *.”

When in the spring of the year 1787,
 I asked one, who will be allowed a most
 capable judge, how he would in a few
 words express our common friend's me-
 rits in philosophy ; the next time I saw
 him, he gave me the following sketch,
 which I transcribe for your perusal ; and
 as he accompanied it with no restrictions,
 I hope I violate no part of friendly confi-

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dence

* Hardley's Observations on Man, vol. ii. p. 247.

dence in making it public, and not wholly concealing (*n*) from whom I received it.

‘ To enumerate Dr. Priestley’s discoveries, would in fact be, to enter into a detail of most of those that have been made within the last 15 years. How many invisible fluids, whose existence evaded the sagacity of foregoing ages, has he made known to us? The very air we breathe, he has taught us to analyze, to examine, to improve: a substance so little known, that even the precise effect of respiration was an enigma, until he explained it. He first made known to us the proper food of vegetables, and in what the difference between these and animal substances consisted. To him, pharmacy is indebted

Mr. Kirwan

(*n*) ——— well known to the philosophical world by his own discoveries; who lately left this country on private concerns of his family. To myself, and to the friends of science and truth in general, on this side the water, he is a great loss, but his native land will be the gainer: a christian from deep inquiry and conviction; and a worshipper of the one only true God, and parent of the universe.

‘debted for the method of making artificial mineral waters, as well as for a shorter method of preparing other medicines; metallurgy, for more powerful and cheaper solvents; and chemistry, for such a variety of discoveries, as it would be tedious to recite: discoveries, which have new-modelled that science, and drawn to it, and to this country, the attention of all Europe. It is certain, that since the year 1773, the eye and regards of all the learned bodies in Europe, have been directed to this country by his means. In every philosophical treatise his name is to be found, and in almost every page. They all own that most of their discoveries are due, either to the repetition of his discoveries, or to the hints scattered through his works.’

It has indeed sometimes happened, that profound mathematicians and philosophers, through a confined attention to that kind of evidence, which is strictly demonstrative, have become incompetent judges of those probable arguments, affording no less certainty, by which a divine revelation

is proved, and its doctrines ascertained ; and have either intirely rejected, or reasoned very imperfectly concerning it. But Dr. Priestley's genius is equal to all subjects ; and remarkable for selecting only the strongest and most suitable arguments upon every one that he handles, and applying and arranging them with exquisite method and simpli-city ; so as to be intelligible to every capacity, and seldom to fail to work conviction in the unprejudiced mind. It may indeed be said of his writings, as has been said of some others, that persons may learn from them to reason justly without having recourse to formal treatises of logic. I speak not this in the way of panegyric. I could name some of the first masters of reasoning in this kingdom, and who are allowed to be so, who attribute this excellency to our author's compositions. And hence it is, that as his singular probity, and his discernment, will never let him undertake a subject which he does not believe himself capable of supporting by just argument, it has seldom failed but that in most of his controversies, he has generally had the voice of all intelligent

ligent and unbiaſſed readers with him. And I cannot ſuffer myſelf to doubt of finding the ſame diſpoſitions in you, with regard to the charges, which Dr. Horne, in your names, advances againſt him; which we are proceeding to conſider.

SECTION IV.

OF THE CHARGES AGAINST DR. PRIESTLEY FOR
HAVING NO FIXED CREED.

Important truth not to be concealed. Offence wrongly taken at Dr. Priestley's publication of the progreſs of his inquiries. Impartial inquirers have no fixed creed. Service of Dr. Priestley's writings to the cauſe of the goſpel. Reasons of Dr. Horne's not ſeeing this.

THE famous Burnet of the Charter-houſe, after having delivered his own ſentiments, with great force of argument, from reaſon and ſcripture, and in a moſt affecting ſtrain, againſt the eternity of future puniſhments, cloſes the whole with this caution; with

which he says some of the ancient fathers, who were of the same sentiment, always accompanied the declaration of it:

(o) "However freely (says he to his ' readers) you may thus see cause to think ' concerning hell, and the future punish- ' ments of the wicked, in your own breast ' and in your closet; you must be careful ' to use the commonly received language ' concerning them, in public and before the ' people. For the bulk of mankind are so ' violently

(o) "De inferno, et futuris impiorum suppliciis, hæc dixisse sufficiat, modo subjicias illud monitum, quod a præfatis patribus, ubi hoc tractant argumentum, sæpius adhiberi solet. Nimirum, quicquid apud te statuas, intus et in pectore, de his pœnis, eternis vel non: recepta doctrina verbisque utendum est cum populo, et cum peroratur ad vulgus; præceptum nempe in vitium, et sola formidine pœnæ a malis absterrendum. Præterea, inter bonos etiam sunt infantes et adulti, *lacte*, vel *cibo solidiore*, pro cujusque viribus, *alendi*. Horum non minus habenda est ratio; nec temere mutanda est parvulorum aut infirmorum diæta, ne intemperies oriatur, et in morbos incidant. Progressum providentiæ, in mundo sensim ad perfectionem promovendo, et illuminanda gente humana, semper ante oculos, semper in consiliis habere oportet: atque pari passu procedendum in studiis et conatibus nostris, donec eo perventum fuerit, ut quod in aurem audivimus, in solariis prædicare liceat."

Burnet de Stat. mort. et resurgent. p. 311. 312.

' violently bent on vice, that they are only
 ' to be restrained and affrighted from it by
 ' a dread of punishment. Even among those
 ' that are better characters, you are to at-
 ' tend to their case, and *feed them with milk,*
 ' (1 Cor. iii. 2.) *or strong meat,* as may suit,
 ' and not rashly alter the diet of weak chris-
 ' tians, lest they be hurt by the change.
 ' And herein we are to imitate the methods
 ' of divine providence in enlightening man-
 ' kind, and bringing its schemes to per-
 ' fection; and to manage the fruits of our
 ' studies and researches in the same way,
 ' till things come to that state, in the which,
 ' *what we have heard with the ear, we may*
 ' *speak on the house-top*"

This learned person's reasons for caution
 and silence upon this subject, however well
 intended, have something unsound in them;
 and are by no means to be approved. For,

1. You are on no account to declare or
 to teach any thing, which you do not be-
 lieve to be true. But this is what he recom-
 mends, viz. to hold forth the popular lan-
 guage concerning hell-torments, when you
 do not believe them to be eternal.

2. On

2. On the contrary, when you are led to treat upon the subject, you should with mildness and good temper, if it be your persuasion, shew, that the language of the scriptures is misunderstood, when men would infer from it the endless duration of the sufferings of wicked men; and also that such a doctrine is wholly incompatible with the ideas we cannot but entertain of the infinite goodness of God: and there you are to leave it, without fear of any harm to the morals of christians resulting from it, and without any doubt but that the most lasting punishments certainly denounced against the evil and impenitent, though they be far from eternal, cannot but have effect upon all that are capable of being deterred from their vicious practices.

3. With respect to the methods of divine providence, they are no rule to us in such things. Our time is short, and our business is to make known important truth to others, as it is discovered to us. It has been owing to a prudence of this kind not always to be commended, that there is still so much darkness and superstition among christians, and the scripture so little understood.

Happily

Happily for mankind, and for the progress of truth, others have thought and acted differently ; and especially Dr. Priestley, in our own times.

The fact with regard to him was this, as appears from his writings and incidental accounts of himself.

Upon that examination, which it becomes every christian to make, of what was instilled into him in his youth, from the sacred writings, concerning the Being that made him, and his expectations from him, he saw the strongest reasons to believe the bible itself to contain an authentic history of divine extraordinary communications to mankind ; but has found cause, from time to time, to alter his opinions concerning many things that had been taught him out of it, and particularly concerning one thing held the most sacred of all others, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the divinity of Christ.

He would not have acted the part of a rational being, if he had taken things of such importance for true, as others delivered them to him, without examining the scriptures, whether they were so or not.

And

And he would not have done his duty as an honest man, if on receiving further light, he had continued to hold forth and profess his former opinions, which he was persuaded had no foundation in the word of God.

He was moreover convinced, that it was highly incumbent on him, for the honour of true religion and the good of mankind, not to stifle the light of truth which he had thus discovered, but to publish it to others, that they might also be benefited by it. And every lover of truth will be thankful to him; especially as he has always fairly and minutely given his reasons to the public for any important change of religious sentiment, and thereby enabled others to judge, whether it has been made on good and sufficient grounds; and has invited all to shew, if in any respect he hath misrepresented facts, or reasoned wrong upon them, or mistaken the meaning of scripture.

But it having happened, that with the openness which is almost peculiar to him,
and

and in the freedom of debate with his friend Dr. Price, where he is mentioning the little fondness he had for the opinions he had received from his education, and how much he had receded from them, he concludes with saying, *I will not pretend to say, when my creed will be fixed*; it is not to be imagined, with what eagerness Dr. Horne seizes this, and runs divisions upon it without end, and would persuade you, that the author of such a declaration must certainly be a man from whom no one can learn any thing or depend upon, as having no fixed creed whatsoever. But indeed in the sense in which Dr. Priestley declares this, you will find that good man, archbishop Tillotson agreeing with him, as will also every person of good sense, and calm reflexion, and that is under no wrong bias: For that worthy prelate, in his funeral sermon for Dr. Whichcot, having mentioned it as customary with learned men, at a certain age, “*to make their understand-*”
“*ings, as he expresses it, and to fix and*”
“*settle their judgments on important*”
“*points, from which they were not to*”
“*recede;*”

“recede;” he commends his (p) deceased friend, that *‘he was so wise as to be willing to learn to the last;’* i.e. he had never any fixed creed.

I am

(p) I would beg leave to recommend to you a prayer of admirable simplicity, composed by archbishop Tillotson, and preserved to us in his works. It shews the excellency of his spirit, and how far he was from approving an unsearching temper in the things relating to God.

O Lord God of truth, I humbly beseech thee to enlighten my mind by thy Holy Spirit, that I may discern the true way to eternal salvation, and to free me from all prejudice and passion, from every corrupt affection and interest, that may either blind or seduce me in my search after it.

Make me impartial in my inquiry after truth, and ready whenever it is discovered to me to receive it in the love of it, to obey it from the heart, and to practise it in my life, and to continue stedfast in the profession of it to the end of my days.

I perfectly resign myself, O Lord, to thy conduct and direction, in confidence that thy mercy and goodness is such, that thou wilt not suffer those who sincerely desire to know the truth, and rely upon thy goodness, finally to miscarry. And if in any thing, which concerns the true worship and service of thee my God, and the everlasting happiness of my soul, I am in any error and mistake, I earnestly beg of thee to convince me of it, and to lead me into the way of truth, and to confirm and establish me in it daily more and more.

And I beseech thee O Lord, always to preserve in me a great compassion and sincere charity towards those that are in ignorance

I am sorry to have occasion here to observe, that upon the most important of all subjects, even with respect to the God you are to worship, Dr. Horne is not willing to permit you, to make free inquiry, or to have any understanding of your own, first or last : but all is to be ready made for you, by those who are supposed to have consulted the scriptures long before you were born, and to have settled the sense in which you are to take every thing in them, upon this subject, as well as many others of great moment.

But this is not all the bad tendency which Dr. Horne finds in this innocent saying of Dr. Priestley's, that *he knew not when his creed would be fixed*. From his departing from the commonly received opinion concerning

rance of thy truth, beseeching thee to take pity on them, and to bring them to the knowledge of it, that they may be saved.

And because our blessed Saviour hath promised, that all who do his will shall know his doctrine, grant, o Lord, that I may never knowingly offend thee in any thing, or neglect to do what I know to be thy will and my duty.

Grant, o heavenly Father, these my humble and hearty requests, for his sake who is the way, the truth, and the life, my blessed saviour and redeemer, Jesus Christ.

cerning the plenary inspiration of the sacred writers, and of consequence maintaining that in all things written by them, they are not alike infallible, the president of Magdalen spares not to insinuate, that this may lead at last to deny (*q*) the resurrection of Christ, and of course renounce christianity and the bible. Nay, by his way of mentioning an advocate of atheism, whom Dr. Priestley had confuted, he drops a grave hint for you to take up, as if he might end there himself.

And this is, without reserve, thrown out against the man, whom you may not hesitate to call one of the most able defenders of the being of a God, and of the truth of the divine revelation contained in the hebrew and christian scriptures, that the world ever saw. This, impartial posterity will confess, however some now gainsay, and speak evil of him.

And permit me to say, that much as you may have acquired from the instructions

(*q*) Letter of an undergraduate to Dr. Priestley, p. 19, &c.

structions of your tutors, or your own reading, you will find that Dr. Priestley's *Institutes of natural and revealed Religion*, will furnish you with many curious, original, useful observations, and new trains of reasoning, to settle your belief of the existence of one first cause of all things, the sole omnipotent creator and parent of the universe, and raise your devout affections towards him, and also to confirm your faith in Jesus Christ, and increase your thankfulness for that discovery of the divine ineffable goodness, and designs for your everlasting happiness, which we have by the gospel.

Dr. Priestley's *History of the corruptions of Christianity*, will give you the greatest satisfaction, as you will there see traced out, with vast labour and exquisite discernment, how this divine religion of the gospel was at first, through the prejudices of those who received it, unavoidably depraved by many polytheistic errors and superstitions, although its founder, the blessed Jesus, taught the worship of the Father alone in spirit and in truth, and that his favour was no

other way to be secured, but by a perseverance in or timely return to the paths of virtue, and a holy obedience. You will there also with pleasure see the present tendency of things in the christian world, towards a restoration of the true religion of the gospel, and its final establishment on on the firmest foundations.

And his *Letters to a philosophical Unbeliever*, Part i. ii. a work singular in its kind, and most admirable, will quiet your minds with respect to the objections which have been raised against the being of a God, and a providence, and the divine missions of Moses and of Jesus; and prepare you to meet the powerful arguments, which are frequently urged against them both, the latter especially, in company, as well as in books; which you will perceive to have their source and all their strength, not from the gospel itself, but from the groundless superstitious doctrines grafted upon it.

And now if you ask, how a scholar and eminent divine, can overlook this and *much more*, which has been accomplished by this celebrated writer, for the vindication and support

support of divine revelation and the gospel, and strive to persuade you that he has done harm to the cause, and 'is even verging towards infidelity and atheism; it is easy to perceive, that Dr. Horne's prejudices deprive him of all true judgment in the case, by making him place the religion of Christ in those things and doctrines, in which its divine author did not place it, and indeed knew nothing of; so that he holds it to be a duty by all means to oppose Dr. Priestley, who denies many of those things, which the other believes to be the most sacred parts of the gospel, to be any part of it at all; and in particular maintains, that there is no God but one, the single person of the universal Father alone; and that Jesus Christ is a creature of that God, like all the rest of us, but most highly favoured and distinguished by him.

From this account you will form your own judgments, and what abatements are to be made in Dr. Horne's representations of Dr. Priestley's sentiments. In p. 8. 9. of his undergraduate's letter, he produces a long list of accusations, which shew his light

manner of exhibiting Dr. Priestley to you, and of putting, in the most odious light, his freedom in criticizing the scriptures; in which you will find that other eminent and esteemed writers have taken as great liberties as he. I shall take notice of every thing of any moment alleged by him, beginning with the subject of inspiration of the scriptures. But let us first hear his charges.

‘ Scripture, (says Dr. Horne,) you
 ‘ seem prepared to discard, whenever it does
 ‘ not please you. Some chapters of the
 ‘ gospel by St. Matthew, and that by St.
 ‘ Luke, are gone, because they teach the
 ‘ miraculous conception. Paul, as you
 ‘ have given the world to understand, does
 ‘ not always know what he is about, but
 ‘ sometimes reasons inconclusively.—You
 ‘ say, *all that Paul could know about Adam,*
 ‘ *and the effects of his sin, he must have learn-*
 ‘ *ed from the books of Moses, which are as*
 ‘ *open to us as they were to him:* you mean,
 ‘ I presume, (for otherwise the observation
 ‘ is made to no purpose) that our expositions
 ‘ are of equal authority with his. And then
 ‘ your words tell us, that you *think yourself at*
 ‘ *liberty to consider the history which Moses has*
 ‘ us

‘given us of the creation and fall of man, as
 ‘the best he could collect from tradition. You
 ‘add, in my opinion there are also many marks
 ‘of its being a very lame account, and far
 ‘from solving the difficulty which it seems
 ‘intended to answer, namely, the introduction
 ‘of death and calamity into the world.—The
 ‘prophets and apostles,’ Dr. Horne con-
 tinues to remark, ‘certainly do not inform
 ‘us, at every turn, that they have received
 ‘from God that information which they
 ‘are about to communicate to us: but
 ‘we are assured, 2 Pet. i. 21. that *holy men*
 ‘*spoke of old as they were moved by the holy*
 ‘*ghost*; and 2 Tim. iii. 16. that *all scripture*
 ‘*is given by inspiration of God.*’

SECTION V.

*What is the just idea of the inspiration of the
 sacred writers. The certain ground upon
 which we go in this way of considering it;
 and its advantages. Dr. Horne's great error
 with respect to the particular inspiration of
 the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews.*

As the kind and degree of divine influ-
 ence, or inspiration, under which the sa-

cred writers composed their respective books, is the hinge on which this accusation turns, I shall endeavour to lay before you such an account of the matter, as may be of some assistance to form your own judgments upon it, before I consider the particular allegations, which you are supposed to bring against Dr. Priestley.

The sacred writers of the New Testament, (and what is said of them is applicable, *cæteris paribus*, to the writers of the Old Testament,) had not the matter they treat of, nor the words, dictated in a supernatural manner to them, by which they were to express themselves, in penning down their respective histories of the gospel of Christ; but were left to collect facts from their proper sources, and to tell them in their own way.

Thus St. Luke, in the preface to his gospel, desires that his account of things may be received by the friend to whom he addresses it, as worthy of credit, for his diligence in gathering it from those who had been eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word. If he had believed that inspiration had been necessary to give credit to his narrative, he would not have failed to have mentioned,
that

that he had his knowlege and information immediately from God.

The same may be said of all the evangelists, with respect to the different subjects which they record. And had it occurred to them, as it did to Luke, to take notice of this circumstance; they would have told us, that they had been careful to put down with fidelity and exactness, what they had seen and heard themselves, respecting their divine master Jesus, as also what they had learned from other competent witnesses.

The four evangelists therefore, after having acquainted themselves, in the best manner they could, with the life, miracles, and discourses of Christ, compiled their several gospels, in the form we now have them; with great judgment confining themselves intirely to the representation of facts, without mixing their own opinions, or descanting upon them.

This has been, and I believe is, the sentiment of judicious christians, on this nice subject: whilst others have pleaded for what they call, a *plenary* inspiration of the sacred writers; i. e. that both in the things related,

lated, and the language in which they conveyed them, they were under an immediate divine influence and direction.

In the preface to his harmony of the four evangelists, Dr. Priestley has shewn, that this high notion of the inspiration of the scriptures, of the gospel in particular, the subject he is treating upon, is contrary to fact; the narratives of the different evangelists being not written with that perfect consistency and agreement with each other, which such a supposition necessarily requires. 4

And moreover, 'as it seems to have been the plan of divine providence, never to furnish miracles, where natural causes were sufficient to procure the desired effect;' such a prodigious divine *apparatus* of a particular inspiration of each sacred writer was wholly unnecessary in the present case, as all the great ends of the gospel, and its credibility, are satisfactorily secured by the testimony of men of the most unquestionable integrity, who were about our Saviour's person, or of others who conversed with them; who drew up different relations of the same facts concerning him, disagreeing only in such mi-

4 See Wakefield's Essay.

minute

nute particulars as might be expected from men who wrote without communication with each other, and such as serves to corroborate and confirm their general and agreeing testimony to every thing of importance.

And he remarks in the same way, that since providence has thought proper to intrust this valuable deposit of the scriptures in human hands, to the fidelity of uninspired transcribers and printers for near 1800 years, it cannot be thought inconsistent with the same plan, to have it conveyed to us in a similar manner from the beginning: the apostles being naturally as capable of relating and writing an account of what they heard and saw, as other persons would be to copy the account after them.

In Section xi. of Observations prefixed to his 'Harmony of the evangelists,' Dr. Priestley has suggested a probable account, how these sacred writers might be possessed of an exact knowlege of the things related by them, though their narrative of them was drawn up several years after the events themselves; and be qualified to compose their histories, such as we now have them.

If

If, without offence, I may be allowed to advise, you should by all means procure this valuable work of Dr. Priestley's; not only for your information and satisfaction on this weighty point of the inspiration of the scriptures, and what will save you much trouble in perusing other authors upon the subject; but as containing much useful matter, needful for the right understanding of the gospel-history, some of it not to be met with in any other books.

Nor is the account here given, too depreciating, or such as reduces the writings of the evangelists to the level of common histories. For they may still be termed in some degree *inspired* writings, as they contain a faithful detail of the doctrine of Christ, which he received immediately from God.

So that when we read the teachings of Christ in the gospel, or his doctrine as held forth in the epistles of his first chosen followers, it is the same as if God himself spake to us.† And we know the doctrine of the apostles, in their several writings, to be from God, by its agreement with that

which

† That is, I apprehend as to the general scope and Tenor of it: otherwise the Argument is merely about words.

which Christ delivered; or by their informing us, whenever they declare any new doctrine, that they received it by a particular revelation made to themselves. So St. Paul, for example, informs the christians of Corinth, that a part of the human species (*r*) would be exempted from the common stroke of death, which all others were destined to feel; namely, those his true and virtuous followers who should be found alive at the second coming of Christ; when by the operation of the divine power, they would be changed, and rendered incorruptible and immortal, at the same moment, with the innumerable dead should be raised to life, who had been, a longer or shorter time, asleep in their graves.

This way of considering the inspiration of the penmen of the New Testament, as confined to the doctrine which they received

(*r*) *Behold I shew you a mystery; all of us shall not sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, (for the trumpet shall sound) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible; and we shall be changed,*
1 Cor. xv. 51. 52.

ceived from Christ, you will find to approve itself to you, the more you reflect upon it, and to be most agreeable to fact, and the real state of the sacred writings.

We are thus also left more at liberty, and more capable of defending our holy religion, when we are not answerable for the justness of every word, and the propriety and aptness of every quotation in the New Testament made from the Old, or the accuracy of the writer's arguments in all respects. We may then consider the apostles, what they really appear to have been, as men of good sense and the most upright dispositions, who would not to gain the whole world advance any thing they did not believe to be true; but who also were liable to prejudices, and fallible, like other men, and therefore might easily be mistaken in their reasonings on incidental subjects, and in the interpretation and application of their antient divine law. And any small mistake of this kind would not affect the competency and sufficiency of their evidence to the most important facts on which the gospel stands; viz. the miracles by
which

which our Lord proved his divine mission ; the discovery made by him of the will of the heavenly Father of all, and the way to secure his favour ; the assurance of a resurrection to a future immortal life after death given by him, and confirmed by his own resurrection. Nay, high divine powers communicated, or absolute infallibility in their reasonings, would add nothing to the apostles' testimony concerning plain facts, which depends on quite different circumstances.

Dr. Horne, in one place, gives a specimen of his own method of considering the inspiration of the apostles, in which he makes you parties as usual ; but from the little that has now been suggested to you, I apprehend you will be far from approving the way he takes.

Speaking of St. Paul's epistle to the Hebrews, he calls it, p. 40, '*a divine exposition of the Old Testament*, and not one of the least among the many instances of God's goodness to his church, that he has caused it to be written and handed down to us.'

For

For this however, you have nothing but his own assertion, which, by itself, can be of no weight.

His notion is built upon the supposition, that the law of Moses was divinely contrived, and appointed, to prefigure, and denote the things concerning Christ, and the gospel; but in an obscure manner, and covered with a veil, which he imagines St. Paul here to remove, by a supernatural knowledge communicated to him.

But as we do not find that Moses, or the prophets, teach or intimate any thing of the kind, it is not credible, that their divine law should have such an important signification, and be wholly concealed from them.

And still farther, St. Paul himself never mentions that he had any particular revelation upon this point, to acquaint him, that such was the divine intention in the appointment of their law and sacrifices: so that what Dr. Horne speaks with such confidence concerning it, seems to be mere imagination, without any foundation.

How

How then, you will inquire, are we to judge of the intent of all these references to the mosaic law, in this epistle to the hebrews, and what degree of inspiration are we to attribute to it?

With respect to the latter inquiry, it is to be observed, that in all these occasional writings of the apostles, no new revelation is to be expected in them, unless when expressly pointed out by themselves; which we do not find here done by St. Paul. But he, as well as the other apostles, being fully informed of the gospel-doctrine, and deeply impressed with the importance of it, would always be able, without any *immediate* divine assistance, to state, and explain and apply it, to any particular purpose, case, or emergency, that called for it, either in preaching or writing. And their doctrine, thus delivered, could not be called mere human teaching, or the word of man, but that which Jesus Christ received by inspiration, and communicated to his followers, *the word of God*.

The special occasion of his inditing this epistle, and the persons to whom it was sent,

sent, and their situation, will unfold the reason of that continual reference to the mosaic institution, which we meet with in this epistle, beyond any other of his writings.

Addressing himself then, as is generally acknowledged, to hebrew christians, residing in Judea, in dangerous times, just before the breaking out of their fatal war against the romans, when they were under many temptations to desert the gospel, his chief design is to confirm them in their adherence to it. And the argument most likely to turn them back to judaism, being this, that the gospel tended to abolish their divine religion, their priesthood and sacrifices, without giving them an equivalent in lieu of it, this eminent teacher makes it his business to shew the superiority of Christ, in character and office, to Moses; and even to angels, by whose instrumentality they supposed their law to have been given; and teaches at large, by comparison, that Christ was a better high priest than any under their law, and his death, or sacrifice, more efficacious and acceptable to God, than their legal sacrifices.

Not that Christ was properly a priest; or his death properly a sacrifice: but our apostle, a jew writing to jews, speaks to them in their own way, in terms of allusion to their old religion and its ceremonies; and intended to signify this only by it, that whatever advantages they supposed that they had from their high priests and sacrifices, christians derived far more and greater from Christ.

That this was the apostle's intent, in applying so much of the jewish history and ritual to his present purpose, I persuade myself you will find on the maturest examination to be the truth; and that in this way of interpreting his letter to his countrymen, you have some sure rule and plan by which to proceed; but in the method which Dr. Horne's prejudices leads him to embrace, you are wholly left to ingenious conjecture, and imagination.

And though there will soon be an opportunity of farther inquiry into the supposed priestly character of Christ, his intercession, and making atonement for us, you will perhaps at present see cause to agree with me, that

H

there

there is no ground for that extreme dissatisfaction, in which you are made to join with the president of Magdalen, at the following passage which he cites from the sequel to the apology on resigning the vicarage of Catterick, p. 88. 89. ‘Our Lord never
‘ called himself an high priest, nor is
‘ spoken of as such by any of the four historians of his life and of the first propagation of his religion among jews and gentiles ; nor is he so styled by any of the
‘ writers of the New Testament, except the
‘ author of this epistle to the hebrews. From
‘ whence we may conclude, that neither
‘ Christ, nor the evangelists esteemed this
‘ to be any real part of his character, or
‘ needful to be attended to by his followers.’

SECTION VI.

SECTION VI.

Moses's account of the transgression of our first parents, much misrepresented, through the bias of wrong religious systems. It is probable, according to Dr. Priestley's conjecture, that he did not receive that account from a particular divine inspiration. How it is to be interpreted. Justification of this way of interpretation, from similar instances in scripture, especially, Christ's temptation. A farther confirmation of the probability, that Moses drew up his history of the fall, in the manner here stated.

Dr. Priestley, in his letters to Dr. Price, p. 158. 159. remarks, that that worthy person had appeared to him, without any just ground, to found, what he calls, the necessity of Christ's incarnation, and the efficacy of his death, on the transgression of our first parents; observing to him, that, 'if the
' *fall* of man, whatever it was, had been an
' event, on which the whole christian scheme
' was thus founded, we might have expected

' a more exprefs declaration, from fufficient
 ' authority, that it was fo. But in none of
 ' the prophecies, in which the Meffiah is
 ' announced, is there the leaft reference to
 ' this catastrophé, which you fuppofe to have
 ' made his incarnation neceffary. Neither
 ' John the Baptift, nor our Saviour himfelf,
 ' ever faid any thing that could lead our
 ' thoughts to it. And notwithstanding the
 ' frequent mention that is made of *the love*
 ' *of God in the gift of his Son* by the apoftles,
 ' it is never faid to have been to undo any
 ' thing that had been done at the fall, fome
 ' paffages of Paul above excepted, who calls
 ' Chrift the *laft Adam*, and makes ufe of
 ' terms which imply that death was intro-
 ' duced by Adam, as eternal life is the gift
 ' of God by Chrift. But you know that the
 ' writings of this apoftle abound with ana-
 ' logies and antitheses, on which no very
 ' ftrict ftrefs is to be laid.'

However contrary this account of the fall
 may found to what you have been accuftomed
 to hear, it certainly deferves your attention
 for the arguments from fcripture by which
 it is fupported, and fo far as they bring con-
 viction

viction to your minds, you will follow them. And it is a reflection, that will very naturally occur to you, whether those persons do not take in too many foreign ideas, and fancy unknown mysteries in the divine moral government, from passages of scripture ill understood, who make it necessary for a being equal to the Almighty himself, or one next in dignity and time to him, to interpose, by condescending to become a weak suffering mortal, and submit to a lingering death in torments, to repair the breach of the divine law by the two first frail creatures of our race; before that consistently with justice, or with we know not what other bar and obstacle, they could be pardoned, although they sincerely repented of their transgression.

And it must be left also to you to judge, whether St. Paul intended his language relating to this event, to be construed in a rigorous sense; or would only thereby teach, in general, the heinousness and fatal wide-spreading effects of sin, and the high consideration in which a virtuous obedience is held by the almighty and holy governor of

the world, in the mighty honour done to Christ, by being the means and instrument of bringing mankind to virtue and an eternal happiness.

Dr. Priestley goes on to establish his sentiment, by observations on the history of the creation and fall of man, which were cited above; in which he maintains, that we are not to look upon Moses as writing under an immediate divine influence, but as giving us the best account of those transactions, that he could collect.

Upon this, Dr. Horne cries out, 'What is this that I hear? ~~it is~~ the voice of Chubb, of Morgan, or of Tindal? of Voltaire, of Hume, or of Bolingbroke?'

It is not to be wondered at that Dr. Horne's prejudices should lead him to this extreme, in a case, where doctrines, which he fancies to lye at the foundation of the gospel, are called in question. But before he made such an exclamation, it would have been the juster way of proceeding, to have

have shewn wherein Dr. Priestley was mistaken. However, though he takes upon him to speak in your name, you will not implicitly follow his decisions, and will not easily class an author with professed unbelievers, who holds no opinions on the subject, but what he thinks authorized by the sacred writings.

Dr. Priestley is not alone in thinking Moses not to have composed his narrative of the fall of our first parents from any supernatural information, but from such materials as he found handed down concerning it. Whilst some have asserted, that the whole narrative was to be taken literally; and that, serpents at that time having the faculty of speech, it was a real serpent that spoke to Eve, who through envy at her superior station, drew her into the transgression of the divine law; and others have supposed that there was no real serpent, but that the devil, under that resemblance, was the tempter, &c. which is the opinion that generally of late has prevailed; many in

Philo.

all times have been persuaded, that some unhappy misconduct of our first progenitors, in giving way to animal pleasure, to the neglect of the divine command, which taught them a just moderation of the inferior appetites, was their crime, and the groundwork of the history we have of it; but that the introduction and craft of the serpent, its dialogue with Eve, &c. are only the circumstances and embellishments in which it is dressed up, these being feigned and invented by Moses in the eastern stile; who probably thought it more proper, and likely to do more good, than if he had spoken of the matter plainly and without a figure (r),

Philo the Jew, who was cotemporary with our Lord's apostles, says, it is not a fable invented at pleasure, but an allegory, expressive of what really happened under feigned images,

*(r) — and for an apple damn mankind.

One is sorry to see men of sense and gravity, that might have known better, dealing in such wit as this on the Mosaic account of the fall.

images, and the serpent is an emblem of vicious pleasure, &c. (1)

The general design is to inform us, that sin and disobedience came in with the first parents of mankind, and was attended with fatal consequences to them, and their posterity. And Moses, as became a pious, holy man, and divine lawgiver, raised up by providence, and supported in an extraordinary manner, gives the description which we have of this fatal transgression, to deter men from gratifying irregular passion, and to keep them in a constant obedience to the will of their maker.

As

(1) See the different opinions of jews and christians concerning the fall, in Le Clerc's commentary and note on Gen. iii. 1. In the following words he probably declares his own opinion, which has also been that of many others: 'Hæc et similia alii cum viderent, eò deveniendum esse censuerunt, ut agnosceremus ex hoc ænigmate hoc tantum liquido posse cognosci; primos, scilicet, humani generis parentes initium fecisse peccandi, unde innumera mala ipsis eorumque posteris incubuere. Constat certe humanum genus, nunc et a multis seculis, corruptissimum fuisse; nec initium ejus labis ullum, infra orbis originem, deprehendi potest. At quomodo peccatum in orbem ingressum sit, adeo ut primi peccati circumstantias perspicue, et sine ulla dubitandi ratione, intelligere possimus, indicare eorum esset, qui rei interfuerunt, si reviviscerent.'

As to the notion commonly received, that the devil under the shape of a serpent, was the prime party concerned in this transaction, and the tempter of Eve; you will be persuaded that Moses could not intend any thing of the kind (*u*), nor indeed believe there

(*u*) Plato, in his last book of the right ordering of a commonwealth, is for having dramatic and epic poets banished out of it, as giving wrong lessons of human conduct, and not teaching the proper government of the passions.

Plutarch, in a set treatise, *πῶς δεῖ τὸν νεὸν ποιημάτων ἀκροῦν*, finds it necessary to lay down many rules and cautions to youth in reading their poets, that they might receive no harm from it.

I am grieved, that it should be needful to put our incomparable poet Milton, in the same predicament, in some degree, with heathen poets. For although intending to serve the cause of true religion, by his immortal poem, *Paradise Lost*, he has contributed, and still contributes, to keep numbers in great errors about it, by the countenance which the charms of his poetry give to the false notion of the existence of a great evil spirit, the devil, or satan, and many inferior evil spirits under him, perpetual enemies to God and all his designs of goodness, and particularly sworn foes to our race; and also the doctrine of the pre existence of Christ; as the supreme God, or as one next to him which you have seen, and will still more see to be void of all support from the scripture. Young persons are surprized into a belief of these things by reading this poet, or rather are thereby

there to be any such being, if you advert to this circumstance; that he never afterwards, throughout his five books, takes the least notice of any thing of the kind. Now if he had believed, that there really existed such an invifible, bufy, evil and moft powerful fpirit, that was continually at men's ears, fufgefting evil thoughts, it could not be but that he would have told of it, and have warned
the

thereby fo confirmed in the popular notions early infilled into them, that the impreffion is feldom effaced, as few fearch the fcriptures for themfelves to fee what they really teach. Whereas young perfons fhould be taught, that Milton's fcenery concerning Chrift and the fallen angels, is like Homer's battles of the gods; the mere fiction of the poet, grounded on paffages of fcripture ill underftood. For none ever did, or ever could oppofe the Almighty by force; and the eminence of our Saviour's character arifes not from any priority of exiftence in point of time, but from thofe virtues of piety, fortitude in fuffering for the caufe of truth, and the moft enlarged benevolence, which conftitute real excellence.

It might feem as though Mofes had fome notion of the exiftence of evil fpirits, who had communication with mankind, from what is faid Lev. xix. 31. *Regard not them that have familiar fpirits*, and from xx. 6. and Deut. xviii. 11. But it is well known to fcholars, that the word in the original fignifies only, thofe that *pretended* to conjure, and foretell things to come. See 1 Chron. x. 13, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6.

the Israelites against such a dangerous enemy. A character so holy and benevolent could not have been silent about it.

The same remark you may make on the preface (*w*) to the book of Job, which speaks of Satan's coming at stated times, into the presence of God, of his being admitted to familiar converse with him, and without reprehension encouraged and empowered to draw men to sin and impiety; you may surely gather that the writer did not hold, and was far from intending to teach

(*w*) Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them. And the LORD said unto Satan, whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And the LORD said unto Satan, hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil. And Satan answered the LORD, and said, doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And the LORD said unto Satan, behold all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the face of the LORD. Job i. 6, &c.

teach, that any such being really existed, because he never afterwards throughout his book names him, where frequent opportunities presented, had he believed that there really had been any such powerful, wicked agent, laying snares to seduce frail mortals : but the whole is a poetical fiction, agreeable to the dark superstition of the times ; still however maintaining the sovereignty of the Almighty author and disposer of all things ; that nothing happens but by his appointment and permission, and under his controul.

So 1 Kings xxii. (x) is not to be construed literally of Almighty God commissioning

(x) *And he said, hear thou therefore the word of the LORD ; I saw the LORD sitting upon his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand, and on his left. And the LORD said, who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead ? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the LORD, and said, I will persuade him. And the LORD said unto him, wherewith ? And he said, I will go forth, and will be a lying spirit to the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, thou shalt persuade him and prevail also, go forth and do it. Now therefore the LORD HATH PUT A LYING SPIRIT IN THE MOUTH OF ALL THESE thy prophets, and the LORD HATH SPOKEN EVIL CONCERNING THEE. 1 Kings xxii. 19, &c.*

fioning a lying spirit to put a lie in the mouth of Ahab's prophets ; but it is a parabolical representation and prediction, in the oriental stile, given by a true prophet, of the willing deception that Ahab was under by means of his false prophets, to whom he listened ; and who would flatter him to his ruin : which was accordingly soon accomplished.

In like manner, our Saviour's temptation in the wilderness, or the trial to which he was put in his religious retirement, before he entered upon his most important office, to prepare and fortify him for the discharge of it ; is described with the same eastern imagery, as the fall of our first parents.

The sacred writers mention the holy spirit of God as directing him into this solitude. And though the devil is named in the scenery, there is no ground to suppose any such being concerned at all. But this beloved son and servant of God, being intrusted with such mighty godlike powers from him, the temptations that would result from his new situation, to abuse his trust, and mislead him from his duty ; whether you consider them

as the natural suggestions of his own pious thoughtful mind; or as purposely presented to it by the holy spirit, or divine power; these, in the high, figurative, prophetic stile, are personified and called the devil, because tending to evil, if not resisted. And attending to the beautiful story, as carried on in this view, it is easy to perceive that the different images, arising in or presented to our Saviour's mind, were the very trials to which as a frail human creature, he would be exposed in the course of his ministry, and which would be his bane and destruction if he did not guard well against them; *namely*, the being too much elated by the great powers lent to him, to turn them to selfish purposes (y) of private ease and gratification; of giddy, wanton (z) vanity; or a towering pride
and

(y) *Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterwards an hungred. And when the tempter came to him he said, if thou be the Son of God, COMMAND THAT THESE STONES BE MADE BREAD.*

(z) *Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a wing of the temple; and saith unto him, if thou be the Son of God, CAST THYSELF DOWN: for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, &c.*

(a) and ambition ; instead of using them, as he did most faithfully, solely for the ends for which they were bestowed, to confirm his divine mission and doctrine.

It will be no small confirmation, that Moses did use a discretion (b) of his own in his manner

(a) *Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them : and saith unto him, ALL THESE THINGS WILL I GIVE THEE, IF THOU WILL FALL DOWN AND WORSHIP ME, Matth. iv. 1. &c.* In like manner as witches, ghosts and apparitions, have all vanished, wherever learning has lighted her torch, and men have sought out the works of God, and discovered the natural causes of seemingly extraordinary appearances : so where the scriptures shall be studied with the like freedom and diligence, it will be found, that there is no powerful unknown agent, called the devil or satan, no possessions of men's bodies by inferior demons, but all nature, all beings, happily under the immediate, sole, uncontrouled direction of their infinitely wise and benevolent creator.

(b) Le Clerc has a curious remark on that part of the narrative, Gen. iii. 4, &c. which contains the serpent's dialogue with the *wife*, as he would have it rendered, and not *woman* : viz. that Moses intended thereby to give a check to the pride of the Israelitish ladies, who took too much upon them, I suppose, upon their coming out of Egypt. Plurimi certe interpretes, inquit, tentatam volunt, absente viro, Hecvam

manner of relating the sin of our first parents, so as might be most serviceable to keep his countrymen, for whom he wrote, in their obedience to the divine law; if it be also true, that he took a latitude of the like kind, for the same end, by advancing and by inserting his account of a divine command, as given at the same early period, even before the fall, I mean the institution of the sabbath, though it was not *actually* instituted and appointed to be observed, till a very long time afterwards.

The prevailing opinion indeed has been in later times, that the sabbath was instituted at the beginning of the world, and with a design to be observed by Adam and all his posterity. But many christians in
early

Hevam, idque a tentatore data opera factum; quippe quam insidioso sermone facilius deceptum iri, quam virum; crederet. Ut tamen non ausim inferiorem ingenio Hevam Adamo adfirmare, ita nec sine aliqua causa, tentationis hanc circumstantiam scriptis mandatam esse crediderim. Multa sunt, in hisce libris, ad mulierum castigandam superbiam comparata, et ex hoc ipso loco, ad mulierum viris conjunctarum, seu *uxorum* fastum deprimendum argumentum ducit Paulus 1 Tim. ii. 14.

early times and since, have been of a different sentiment. And such eminent judicious scholars and exemplary christians, as Le Clerc, Beaufobre and L'Enfant, and Mr. Archdeacon Paley in our own times, (c) after them ;

(c) " In my opinion, the transaction in the wilderness above recited, Exodus xvi, was the first actual institution of the sabbath. For, if the sabbath had been instituted at the time of the creation, as the words in *Genesis* may seem at first sight to import, and if it had been observed all along from that time to the departure of the Jews out of Egypt, a period of about two thousand years, it appears unaccountable that no mention of it, no occasion of even the obscurest allusion to it, should occur either in the general history of the world before the call of Abraham, which contains, we admit, only a few memoirs of its early ages, and those extremely abridged ; or, which is more to be wondered at, in that of the lives of the three first Jewish patriarchs, which, in many parts of the account, is sufficiently circumstantial and domestic. Nor is there in the passage above quoted from the sixteenth chapter of Exodus, any intimation that the sabbath, then appointed to be observed, was only a revival of an ancient institution, which had been neglected, forgotten, or suspended ; nor is any such neglect imputed either to the inhabitants of the old world, or to any part of the family of Noah ; nor, lastly, is any permission recorded to dispense with the institution during the captivity of the Jews in Egypt, or on any other public emergency.

The

them; have maintained, by such evidence from the sacred writings as is not easily to be set aside, that though the seventh day is said, Gen. ii. 3. to be *blessed by God and sanctified*, immediately after the creation, the actual separation and distinction of it from the other days of the week and religious

I 2

obser-

The passage in the second chapter of Genesis, which creates the whole controversy upon the subject, is not inconsistent with this opinion; for as the seventh day was created into a sabbath on account of God's resting upon that day from the work of the creation, it was natural enough in the historian, when he had related the history of the creation, and of God's ceasing from it on the seventh day, to add, "and God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that on it he had rested from all his work which God created and made," although the blessing and sanctification, i. e. the religious distinction and appropriation of that day, was not actually made till many ages afterwards. The words do not assert, that God *then* "blessed" and "sanctified" the seventh day, but that he blessed and sanctified it *for that reason*; and if any ask, why the sabbath or sanctification of the seventh day, was *then* mentioned, if it was not *then* appointed, the answer is at hand; the order of connection, and not of time, introduced the mention of the sabbath, in the history of the subject which it was ordained to commemorate." Archdeacon Paley's Principles of moral and political philosophy, p. 44, &c. Vol. ii. 8vo. See also Beaufobre et L'Enfant, Pref. Gen. sur le N. T. p. cxxviii. to cxxiv. *See also the*

very learned Faculté Gottes' Note on the Place in his Critical Remarks. Gen. 2:3

observance of it, was not commanded, nor did take place, till the time of the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt. And if so, which I believe you will find to be a just statement, Moses spoke of the sabbath in Genesis, only by way of anticipation, and of his own accord, to give the greater dignity and solemnity to the observance of the institution. *See Dr. Geddes' Bible on the place.*

SECTION VII.

Dr. Priestley's freedom in mentioning some defects in St. Paul's reasoning; and in criticizing other parts of scripture, countenanced by other christians of acknowledged eminence; by Erasmus, Castellio, Luther, Mr. Whiston, Dr. Durell.

WHATEVER Dr. Priestley remarks concerning St. Paul's reasoning, that it is not always conclusive, especially in his applications of the scriptures of the Old Testament, it is by no means inconsistent with his holding him in general to be an excellent reasoner, as well as an enlightened divine teacher,

teacher, and ardent unwearied propagator of the truth. If the Doctor be mistaken in what he has asserted on this subject, let his errors be published, and he will be thankful to the hand that points them out. But let him not on such accounts be traduced as an unbeliever and enemy to the gospel, when if his observations be just, he is its truest friend (*d*). For it looks better, and is

I 3

more

(*d*) Mr. Tucker, in his joco-serious vision, where he is introduced to Locke, and Plato, brings in the latter passing severer censures on the Cilician of Tarsus, as he styles St. Paul, than any thing advanced by Dr. Priestley; after which, the father of the academy thus farther characterises him.

‘He (Paul) then owned, that he had received heavenly gifts in earthly vessels, and though the liquor was not at all impaired thereby in substance or virtue, it might get some twang of the vessel. His education at the feet of Gamaliel led him, and the general taste of his countrymen, obliged him, to deal in far-fetched extravagant figures, which, as that taste subsided, lost all resemblance with the things signified, but *were understood literally*, thereby leading men quite wide of his meaning, involving them in useless subtilties, inextricable difficulties, and endless disputes. If he had staid among us, till my brother Locke here came up, he would certainly have been a great favourite with him. I am persuaded he would have said, nobody understood him so well since his own immediate scholars.’ Vol. iv. 259. 260. A fine compliment, this last, to Mr. Locke.

more creditable for a believer in revelation to point out any defects in the sacred writers, than to dissemble, and leave them to be detected and boasted of by its enemies; and neither the truth of the gospel, nor the weight of Paul's testimony to it, are at all affected by his arguing ill on some abstruse incidental points introduced by him, in his epistles.

We find Erasmus, in his day, condemned in the same way, for not reckoning St. Paul to be under a divine direction in every thing he wrote, and infallible. 'Eckius, the man who became Luther's adversary soon after, in a letter to Erasmus, in the year 1518, blames him likewise for having said on Matthew ii. 'that the evangelist might cite 'some authorities from the Old Testament, 'by memory, and without consulting the 'original; and that by trusting their memories, they might, as often happens, fall 'into mistakes.' And he is displeased with him, because he had advanced on Acts x. 'that the apostles, in speaking greek, mixed 'the

‘ the idioms of their native language with
‘ it; and that they learned greek not from
‘ Demosthenes’s *orations*, but from the po-
‘ pular dialect.’

To this Erasmus replied; ‘ that in cen-
‘ suring the apostles for slips of memory,
‘ he had affirmed nothing of himself; but
‘ had only spoken after St. Jerom. And
‘ that it did not follow, that a person re-
‘ jected the scriptures, because he frankly
‘ confessed there were some considerable
‘ mistakes in them; especially, ’as it was a
‘ point by no means settled how far inspi-
‘ ration did extend.’ Le Clerc, Biblio-
theque choisie, Tom. v. p. 233. 257.

Among many most learned, in the very
learned times, at the beginning of the re-
formation, in the foremost rank may be
placed, Sebastian Chateillon, otherwise Cas-
tellio, or Castalio. To that great work he
contributed by a translation of the scriptures
into the most classical latin, without losing the
sense and strength of the original, but the
contrary: and into his mother tongue, the
French, in a plain and homely stile. For
both, he had to encounter with great oblo-

NB.

quy, and opposition from his cotemporaries, and from others, since their time; but posterity, though late, has rendered him justice, and his translations now are much esteemed.† What adds to his character and worth is, that in the midst of these labours, he was under many discouragements, and often depressed with penury. Whilst he filled a school at Geneva, to which Calvin had recommended him, he had some lesser disagreements with that reformer, through his free sentiments concerning the song of Solomon, which he thought unworthy of a place in the bible; and also by his denying the article of Christ's descent into hell, to signify his going to the place of the damned. But (e) Calvin kept no bounds afterwards in

(e) To make amends for things less favourable, which truth has compelled to relate concerning this eminent reformer, I shall here present you with some masterly strokes of his character of a different complexion, together with a fine sketch of Luther, as I find them, drawn together, by no vulgar hand; who in high party-times, shewed himself in his writings, a friend to his country, and to the civil and religious rights of men. He is speaking of the wretched state of things, when popery reigned triumphant in this western world.

‘ Then, says he, was *schism* a thing unknown; Then

by Dr. Symonds, Princip. Campbell, Giddes &c. ‘no

in his calumnies, in which he was seconded
by his pupil Beza, against a man, in learning
and

‘ no sooner was a *heretic* heard of, than he was delivered
‘ to *Satan*; and little quiet had he till conveyed to him in a
‘ fiery chariot! Oh! *Luther*! *Luther*!

‘ But they say, thou would’st rail, would’st throw thy
‘ dirt about without distinction. But in this how far be-
‘ neath the good *St. Jerom*! Nor didst thou treat our *Henry*
‘ with less politeness, than *Constantius* and *Julian* met with
‘ from *reputed saints*. In learning equal to that army of
‘ foul-mouthed adversaries that attacked thee. Acute to an
‘ uncommon degree. Of a blameless life, and for courage,
‘ compared with thee *Alexander was a coward*. In all re-
‘ spects fitted wast thou, for that great work providence
‘ designed thee. This sacrament (*of the Lord’s supper*) thou
‘ purgedst from iniquity, but expressedst thyself amiss. But
‘ so long had the world been used to *adore* it, that it could
‘ not bear the *naked truth*.

‘ And *Calvin*!—shall I pass by thee without regard! Thy
‘ diction *attic*; elevated and just thy sentiments; thy mo-
‘ rals pure. Learn’d, ingenious, penetrating, and of sound
‘ judgment. Not acquainted with books alone, and theo-
‘ logical disputes, but knowing men. Above the views
‘ of wealth. Resolv’d, steady, indefatigable. Shewing
‘ what a genius and industry can do, in a few years,
‘ and in bad health. Oh! had *Servetus* lived! Not less
‘ thy blot, than *Uriah’s* wife to *David*! In the camp of
‘ *Antichrist*, let *D’Alva* wear the consecrated sword. Let
‘ *Dominic* be fainted. But let not the true flock of Christ pol-
‘ lute its hands in blood, for *useless notions*. Let vice be
‘ punished, but let thought be free, and have it’s liberal
‘ course!’—The Sacrament a plain and rational institution,
&c. by Edward Lewis, M. A. Rector of Waterstock and
Emington, in Oxfordshire, p. 82, 83. 1751.

and genius their equal at least, in self-government and the cultivation of the mild, benevolent spirit of the gospel, leaving them both far out of sight. Castellio's great crime was, his opposition in conversation, as well as from the press, to their intolerant principles, and favourite doctrine of predestination, and of punishing heretics by the civil power, i. e. by burning them alive. The mean part which Calvin took in entrapping the unfortunate Servetus, and afterwards in procuring his condemnation, which ended by his being burn'd at a stake, by the magistrates of Geneva, will be a stain on his memory, never to be effaced.

But what leads me to mention Castellio here, is a short latin MS, part of a larger work, composed the year in which he died, preserved by Wetstein at the end of the second volume of his New Testament. If he had never written any thing more, this would have discovered his liberal mind, and uncommon penetration, and insight into the true meaning of the sacred writings. His admirable remark on the distinction which is to be made, in the things, which are the

+ See Robinson's Ecclesiastical Researches
p. where this wicked transaction is
-adverted on. subject

subject matter of the New Testament, furnishes a full justification of what Dr. Priestley, and others, have advanced, relating to the partial inspiration of the sacred writers, and is a sufficient apology for any faults, mistakes, disagreements, or defective reasonings, which may happen to be found in them. I shall give an english version of this precious rellique, putting the original in the margin, that you may the better form your judgment of both. He had generally a flowing elegant latin pen, though here he seems to have attended less to the stile than the sense, being studious to make that perspicuous and strong.

Wetstein tells us, that Castellio's title of the work, was *De arte dubitandi et confitendi, ignorandi et sciendi*; i. e. of the art of doubting and of being assured, the art of ignorance and knowlege. The title itself has more in it to be learned, than you find in many large books. For it is no ordinary attainment, to know, when to doubt, and when to be assured; and when to be ignorant. The greater part never own their doubting, or being ignorant of any thing.

Cæptum

Cæptum ineunte anno 1563.

L I B. I. C A P. XII.

Quod attinet ad discordiam, aut etiam repugnantiam, quæ videtur esse, sacrarum literarum, sciendum est, eam discordiam aut verborum esse, aut rerum; ac de verbis primum dicemus. Verborum discordia aut librariorum est aut authorum, &c.

C A P. XIV.

SED in rerum discrepantia major existit difficultas, et de qua alioquin tacere quam loqui mallet, ad vitandam vel infirmiorum offensionem, vel iniquiorum invidiam, quæ in hoc argumento vix ac ne vix quidem videtur posse evitari; verum quia sine hujus explicatione instituto meo satisfacere, et latentem in rebus, ad conscientiarum tranquillitatem necessariis, veritatem eruere non possum, audendum est. Interea ab infirmioribus peto, ut rem sæpius perpendant antequam judicent;
multa

Begun at the commencement of the year 1563.

B O O K I. C H A P. XII.

WITH respect to any seeming disagreement, or even contradiction, in the sacred writings, it is to be noted, that it must either be, in words or in things. Disagreement in words, is either the fault of the transcribers, or from the authors themselves, &c. (Here I omit some just and most ingenious remarks, hastening to what is still of more importance.)

C H A P. XIV.

*BUT the greatest difficulty is, where the disagreement is in things themselves. Concerning which, to avoid giving offence to the weak, and exciting the ill will of others who are less candid, I should be inclined to say nothing at all. Yet I must take courage and make the attempt, since otherwise I cannot execute my design, and draw out to light the truth in such points as are necessary for the quiet of men's consciences. In the mean while, I intreat it as a favour of my weaker brethren, that they weigh the matter well, before they finally decide upon it: for
many*

multa enim prima fronte, quia nova sunt, displicent, quæ postea diligentius considerata placent et probantur.

Igitur primum omnium illud sciendum est, in sacris literis quatuor esse orationis genera, de quibus, quia loquitur obiter Paulus, ejus verba in 1 Cor. xiv. hic subjiciam: ‘ alioquin
‘ fratres, inquit, si ego vos alienis linguis al-
‘ locutum veniam, quid vobis prodero, nisi
‘ insit in oratione mea patefactio, aut cognitio,
‘ aut vaticinatio, aut doctrina?’ *Patefactio-*
nem appellat, si quid homini divinitus pate-
factum est. *Vaticinatio* est alioquin eadem
cum patefactione, nisi quod conjuncta est cum
mentis agitatione atque permotione. *Cog-*
nitionem interpreto eam, quæ ex visis aut au-
ditis efflorescit. *Doctrinam* appellari a Paulo
arbitror eam, quam homini literæ et ratio con-
ferunt. Hanc illic esse mentem Pauli, nemo,
opinor, negabit: certe etiam si illa nec Paulus
nec quisquam alius dixisset, res ipsa per se
vera est, videlicet hæc orationis quatuor esse
genera

many things, which we are prejudiced against at first on account of their novelty,—gain our approbation and please us, after more mature consideration.

First then it is to be attended to, that, in the sacred writings, there are four sorts of subjects of discourse. And as Paul incidentally mentions them in one place, I shall quote them, 1 Cor. xiv. 6. Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking in foreign languages, what shall I profit you, unless I speak by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophecy, or by doctrine.

Revelation, the apostle calls, what is made known in an extraordinary manner by almighty God.

Prophecy is the same, only received somewhat differently.

By knowledge, I understand what grows out of what we see and hear.

Doctrine, I call that which we gather from learning, and our reasoning faculties.

This, I apprehend, no one will deny to be Paul's real meaning. Indeed, if neither Paul, nor any one else had said it, the thing would in itself be true, that these are the four subjects

of

genera sacrorum scriptorum; sic enim scripserunt, ut alioqui loqui inter sese de rebus divinis soliti erant, neque enim alia mens aut scientia aut spiritus erat scribentium quam loquentium, nec aliud sunt ipsorum scripta, quam ipsorum cum absentibus aut posteris colloquia. Id quod planum facere facile esset. Nam patefactionis exemplum est in Paulo, qui se evangelium non ab ullo homine, sed Jesu Christo patefaciente didicisse dicit, *Galat. i.* Vaticinationis in Agabo in *Actis*; sed ea quidem, quatenus mentis habet agitationem, ad institutum nostrum non pertinet, siquidem illa mentis agitatio, et, ut vocatur, vatum bacchatio, non literarum, sed actionis et gestus est, qui in scriptis cerni non possunt. Cognitionis exemplum est in Lucæ et Joannis historiis, qui narrant, hic quæ ipse vidit et nonnulla ex parte gessit, ille quæ ex viris fide dignis cognovit. Doctrinæ exemplum est in Pauli ad Galatas disputatione de
legis

of discourse in the sacred writers. For they wrote concerning divine things, exactly in the same way as they were wont to talk about them with one another; and whether they wrote or spake, their mind and knowlege and divine inspiration were the same; nor are their writings any thing else but their conversation with absent christian friends, or with posterity.

This matter may be easily explained. For Paul gives us an example, what revelation is, in himself, where he says, *Gal. i. 11, 12.* "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me, is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."

What Agabus, *Acts xxi. 10, 11.* said of Paul's bonds and imprisonment, is an instance of prophecy.

The histories of John, and Luke, are specimens of what the apostle calls knowlege; the former relates what he saw, and wherein he was in part an actor himself; Luke, what he learned from credible witnesses.

What the apostle would have us to understand by doctrine, is exemplified in the disqui-

legis operibus et fidei justificatione, in qua sacrarum literarum auctoritate rationibusque nititur. Quæ cum ita sint, nobis ita versandum est in sacris auctoribus, ut hæc tria, videlicet patefactionem, cognitionem et doctrinam non confundamus; sed quæ patefactione tradita sunt, ea pro oraculis: quæ cognitione, pro testimoniis: quæ doctrina, pro hominum sententiis habeamus. Ita fiet ut tantum cuique rei, quantum ipsius natura postulat, tribuentes, eas perturbationes evitemus, quæ ex hujusce distinctionis ignoratione nascentes, non nisi eadem cognita et admissa tolli possunt.

Igitur si quæ occurrunt in sacris literis vel discrepantiæ vel repugnantia, diligenter considerandum erit, utrum eæ sunt in oraculis, an in testimoniis, an in hominum sententiis: nam si erunt in oraculis, oportebit

sitions concerning the works of the law, and justification by faith, in his epistle to the Galatians; where he makes use of reasoning and arguments drawn from the authority of the hebrew scriptures.

Now since this is the true state of facts, we must be careful in reading the sacred writers, that we do not create confusion and mistake by blending these three things together, revelation, knowledge, and doctrine, and by arguing upon them as the same; but keeping them distinct, to look upon what comes by revelation, as the oracles of God; what knowledge of facts we have, to consider as received by credible testimony; and what is delivered as doctrine, to esteem only as the opinions of men. By this separate consideration and distinguishing of each subject, we shall steer clear from that confusion and error, which will otherwise be unavoidable.

If therefore we meet with any disagreement or contradiction in the sacred writings, we must carefully observe, whether it be in the oracles, i. e. the word of God, or in the testimonies to it, or the opinions of men about it. For if it be in the word of God itself, we

tebit circumstantias omnes et locorum, et temporum, et personarum, et occasionum atque causarum sedulo perpendere, ut in ea, quæ videbatur, discordia, concordiam inveniamus: quod si ne sic quidem invenierimus,tribuendum id erit ignorantiae nostræ, et credendum aliquid ibi esse nobis ignotum, quod si perciperemus summam ibi concordiam esse videremus: nam spiritus veritatis, qui oraculorum istorum author est, non pugnat ipse secum; nec in eum vel oblivio, vel error, vel ignorantia ulla cadit. Sin erunt in testimoniis, non oportebit nos nimis esse superstitiosos neque singula verba curiosius observare atque inter sese componere, sed ea concordia, quæ est in summa rei, contentos esse; nam si duorum aut trium testimonio credi leges tum profanæ tum sacræ recte jubent, cum tamen ejusmodi testimonia raro (præsertim si de re sunt paulo vel prolixiore vel implicatiore) in singulis verbis concordent, etiam si testes sunt alioqui viri probi et veraces: debemus in sacrorum authorum testimoniis illam legem vel prudentiam vel æquitatem sine morositate

must diligently weigh and consider all the circumstances of place, time, persons, occasions, reasons for delivering it, till we find a real harmony, where we thought the disagreement lay. But if we cannot by these means discover it, we must believe that there is some point of which we are ignorant, which if we could see, all would be in perfect agreement. For the spirit of truth, ~~God himself~~, who is the author of this word, cannot contradict himself, nor can forgetfulness, or error, or ignorance belong to him.

But if the disagreement be in the testimonies to the facts of the New Testament, we are not to be too superstitious, nor over minute and scrupulous in marking and comparing each word, but to content ourselves with a general agreement upon the main points. For if laws both human and divine, direct us, very properly, to give credit to two or three witnesses, although such witnesses, otherwise very upright and honest men, seldom agree in every word, especially if it be in a matter of any length or obscurity; we ought surely to observe the same rule, and be governed by the like prudence and equity, without any troublesome nicety

tate imitari, alioquin nostra morositate nihil aliud consequemur, quam quod aut nulli auctores, five sacri, five profani, nobis satisfacient, aut eas minutias conciliare conantes quæ conciliari nequeunt, ineptos nos ne dicam ridiculos præbeamus. Ac quod dixi de testimoniis, idem dico de hominum sententiis, videlicet tantum eis tribuendum esse, quantum sanctorum hominum dictis tribui debet, vel quantum ipsimet sibi tribuunt; non tamen ut eodem cum oraculis loco habeamus, cum ne ipsi quidem hoc a nobis postulent.

C A P. XV.

NON dubito quin hoc loco nonnulli offendantur. Clamabunt esse blasphemiam: sacras enim literas esse divino afflatu conscriptas, neque hominum, sed dei arbitrio editas: quarum, si vel unum verbum in dubium vocetur, periculum

or exactness, in weighing and reconciling the testimonies of the sacred writers. For we shall gain nothing else by our scrupulosity, but such a degree of scepticism, that no testimony of authors, profane or sacred, will satisfy us; or shall make ourselves perfectly ridiculous, by endeavouring to reconcile trifling differences, which never can nor need to be adjusted.

And this that I have remarked concerning testimony, is to be extended to opinions of their own, delivered by the sacred writers. We are to pay as much deference to them as is due to holy and good men, or as much as they themselves require of us: but not to erect them into oracles, or place their word upon a level with the word of God, when they themselves are far from demanding any such thing from us.

CHAP. XV.

I HAVE no doubt but some will here be offended, and cry out, that I speak blasphemy; alleging that the scriptures were written by divine inspiration; and published, not by the will of men, but of God; and that if but one

periculum sit ne cadat earum auctoritas. A quibus ego postulo, ne ante de dictis meis judicent, quam ea rite et diligenter perpenderit. Ego sacris literis non minus tribuo, quam quisquam alius, et secundum earum doctrinam et vivo hactenus, et, ut spero ad finem usque vivam; ac deum precor, ut potius me ex hac vita tollat, quam ut a tam sancta et divina doctrina vivum deflectere patiatur; sed quorundam superstitioni, hominum alioquin, ut ego existimo, non improborum, obviam eundum puto, qui dum sic singula verba, ubi nihil necesse est mordicus urgent, perturbant imprudenter ecclesiam opinionum dissensionibus, quæ qua alia via componi possint, nondum videre quivi; et tentatæ sunt, idque jam diu, et a multis, multæ viæ: ego vero sententiam meam, et rationibus, et ipsarum, de quibus agimus, sacrarum literarum auctoritate, planam, ut spero, faciam. Deinde si quid in ea est incommodi, conferam, cum dissentientis sententiæ incommodis, quæ si majora esse evicero,

word in them be called in question, there will be a danger of the authority of the whole coming to nothing.

All I ask of these persons, is, not to decide upon what I say, before they have rightly and attentively considered it. I have as much reverence for, and attribute as much to the scriptures, as any one; and have lived all my life, and hope to live to the end of it, in conformity to what they teach me; and I pray God sooner to take me out of the world, than suffer me to turn aside from so holy and divine an institution. But I hold it right to oppose the superstition of some well-meaning persons, as I esteem them, who, by obstinately dwelling on every word, imprudently disturb the christian church with continual dissensions, which I know not any other way than this, of composing, though many have long been tried, and by different persons. I have however a good hope of recommending my own method, by the reasons with which I shall support it, and the authority of the scriptures, which are the point in question. After this, I shall contrast the inconveniencies, if any there be, which may attend it, with those of the opposite sentiment;

evicero, postulabo ut ea sententia, quæ et vera est, et minus habet incommodi, non repudietur; quod si impetravero, viam ut spero habebimus ad dirimendas graves et perniciosas controversias.

Ac primum quod ad rationem attinet, illud mihi negabit nemo, solere legatos, quæ a principe mandata acceperunt, ea ut principis mandata exponere, quæ in dubium vocare non liceat: quæ vero ipsi sua sponte dicunt, ea ipsos (si boni fideique sunt legati) non principi sed sibi adscribere, nec eandem his quam illis auctoritatem poscere; deinde illud constare debet, Christum ea hominibus conferre solitum bona, non quæ jam a natura haberent ipsi, sed quibus carerent; quod si quod jam habebant a natura bonum, etiam si id esset non undequaue perfectum, tamen quia ejus usus eis commode constabat, id ipse nec novum conferebat, nec melius aut perfectius reddebat: itaque si quando claudum sanabat, tantum claudita-

tatem

timent; and if these last shall be proved to be much more weighty and considerable, all I desire is, that the opinion, which is true, and accompanied with the fewest difficulties, may not be rejected: and if I can carry this point, I trust we shall discover a way to put an end to many considerable and pernicious disputes.

And first with respect to the reasons, upon which it is founded, this point will be readily granted me, that ambassadors, who have received any commands from their prince, always lay them down in such a manner, that no one can dispute about them: but, if they be true and trusty men, what they deliver of their own accord, they will be cautious to ascribe to themselves and not to the prince, and not to require the same submission to be paid to it.

In the next place, we may be assured, that Christ did not bestow those benefits and qualities upon men which they naturally possessed, but which they were in want of. Therefore if they had any natural talent, though it might not be altogether perfect, yet because it might serve them very well, he did not give them a new one, or alter that which they had for the better. If, for example, he healed a lame
man,

tatem sanabat; linguam quidem aut aures aut oculos aut os claudi nec sanabat, quippe sani; nec corripbat aut perfectiora reddebat, quippe quibus jam alioquin uti poterant, quod idem et de cæteris dictum volo. Quod si in corpore id faciebat, idem in animo quoque eum facere, ut mihi concedatur, postulo, cum sit in animo eadem et causa et ratio quæ in corpore. Ipsemet pronunciavit, sanos non egere medico sed ægros; id quod de animorum morbis dixit, in quibus idem, quod in corporum morbis factitabat. Quare sic statuamus, Christum ea homini conferre, quibus homo caret: quæ vero alioquin habet homo, non item. Igitur ut hæc duo, quæ videlicet tum de legatis, tum de morborum sanationibus dixi, ad institutum nostrum accomodentur, hæc dico: Erant apostoli, (ut ab his potissimum exemplum ducamus,) Christi legati, a quo quæ mandata acceperant, ea ut Christi mandata atque oracula bene et fideliter, (quippe sancti justique viri) vel iis qui ipsos præsentēs

man, he only cured his lameness; his tongue, ears, eyes, and mouth, he left as they were, as being already in a sound state; nor did he make any change or improvement in them, as they very sufficiently answered their purpose. The same remark I would make in every other instance. I require also that it may be conceded to me, that he proceeded in the same way, in healing mens' minds, as their bodies, since the cases are exactly parallel. He himself declared () those that are well need not a physician, but those that are sick. This he spoke of the diseases of the mind, in which he used the like process as in those of the body. It is therefore a settled point, that Christ conferred on the man, what the man wanted; but what the man already otherwise possessed, he meddled not with.

To apply therefore to our purpose, what I have here noted concerning the office of ambassadors, and of the healing of diseases. The apostles, (that I may particularly exemplify the subject in them) were the ambassadors of Christ. What commands they received from him, as they were holy and righteous men, they would deliver truly and faithfully, as his commands
and

præsentes audiebant, verbis, vel absentibus, et porro nobis, scriptis exposuerunt: ac de iis dubitare non licet. Sin aliquid non a Christo mandatum, sed ipsi sua sponte dicebant, id non Christi, aut spiritui sancti, sed sibi adscribebant.

Jam cum Christus eorum opera usus fuerit, non dubium est quin eos instruxerit rebus ad id munus necessariis; sed sic instruxerit, ut si quid alioquin habebant, id non dederit. Exempli gratia, erat eis ad loquendum opus lingua: eam nemini eorum dedit, quippe jam haberent; erat opus auribus ad auditorum verba audienda: nec eas quidem dedit; erat et pedibus opus ad iter, neque eos dedit: denique nihil eis dedit, quod jam haberent. At peregrinarum linguarum scientiam, qua et opus erat ad docendos populos, et ipsi carebant, dedit; et miraculorum potestatem contulit, et eis ad percipienda oracula mentem aperuit; denique omnia illis ad munus istud necessaria, quibus alioquin carebant, contulit.

Jam

and divine oracles, either in words to those that were their hearers, or in writing, to those that were absent ; and so to us. Concerning these things we can have no doubt. But what they had not received from Christ, but spoke of their own motion, this they did not ascribe to Christ, or to the holy spirit, but to themselves.

As Christ moreover was to make use of their ministry, there can be no question, but that he furnished them with every thing necessary for their office : but then, not so as to supply them with what they already otherwise enjoyed. For instance : it was necessary for them to have a tongue to speak with : this he gave to none of them, because they already had it. The like may be said of ears, and feet, and so on. In a word, he gave them nothing of what they already had. But as the knowlege of foreign languages was necessary to teach other nations, and they were without it, he bestowed it upon them : he gave them also a power of working miracles, and opened their minds to understand the word of God ; in short, conferred upon them every thing they stood in need of, to discharge and fulfil their office and trust.

Again.

Jam cum et memoriæ et intellectus vim à natura haberent, si quæ erant vel memoriæ vel intellectus ope scribenda, Christus eis ad illa scribenda memoriam aut intellectum non dabat, non magis profecto quam oculos aut manus aut chartam aut atramentum, quippe cum omnia illa jam haberent: sed ipsi sua memoria suoque ingenio illa scribebant. Quod si cujus eorum memoria vel ingenium erat infirmius, ei poterat in scribendo idem accidere, quod in loquendo, et quod cæteris bonis viris interdum accidit; videlicet ut ei dictum aliquod excideret infirmioris vel memoriæ vel judicii. Scripsisse autem eos non omnia patefaciente spiritu sancto, sed quædam ope memoriæ, alia ingenii, patet ex eorum scriptis. Nam quod ad memoriam attinet, didicerunt evangelistæ evangelium non patefactione, ut Paulus, sed vel quia ipsi adfuerunt, ut Matthæus et Joannes, vel ex iis, qui adfuerant,

cog-

Again. As they had from nature received the powers of memory, and understanding; in those things that were to be written down by the help of memory and understanding, Christ did not give them a memory and understanding to write them, any more than he gave them eyes, and hands, and paper, and ink, because they already had all these things: but they they composed their writings from their own memories and abilities. And if it was so, that any one of them had not a very strong memory, or slower parts, the same might befall him in writing, as in speaking, and what sometimes happens to men in other respects most worthy; namely, to make a slight slip, or forget something, through defect of memory or judgment. And that they did not indite every thing by inspiration; but some things by memory, and from their own understandings, is apparent from their writings.

With respect to their making use of their own memories, it is observable, that all the four evangelists learned the gospel, not from revelation, as did Paul; but either from what they saw and heard themselves, as was true of Matthew, and John; or they had their in-

L formation

cognoverunt, ut Marcus et Lucas; id quod ipsimet testantur, siquidem Joannes in evangelio testatur se visa testari, cap. xix. et xxi. Et idem in 1 epistolæ suæ initio tradit se, quod et oculis viderit, et auribus audiverit, et manibus pulpaverit, id testari; ex quo apparet, eum dicere testimonium, ad quod dicendum nihil ei, sicuti Paulo, opus erat patefactione. Lucas quoque testatur se ex aliis audita scribere, id quod profecto non dixisset, si evangelium, sicuti Paulus, patefactione cognovisset; quod idem et de cæteris duobus, scilicet Matthæo et Marco, censendum est. Item quod ad ingenium attinet, scribit diserte Paulus 1 Cor. viii. 'Conjugibus præcipio, non ego, sed dominus,' &c. et mox: 'cæteris ego dico, non dominus;' et paulo post, 'de virginibus

formation from those who were present to the transactions, which was the case of Mark and Luke. This we gather from themselves. For John in his gospel tells us, that he bore testimony to what he himself saw, xix. 35. xxi. 24. In the beginning likewise of his first epistle he mentions, that he bore witness to what he had heard, and seen and looked upon and handled. Hence it appears, that he did not need any revelation, as Paul did, to bring him acquainted with the gospel, and to enable him to make credible report of it to others. Luke also, i. 2, 3, tells us, that he wrote from the information of those, who were eye-witnesses; which he would not have said, if he had received the knowledge of the gospel, as Paul, by revelation: and the same judgment we are to form of Matthew, and Mark, though they themselves say nothing on the subject.

Also with regard to the sacred writers recording some things merely from the fund of their own understandings and good sense, Paul says expressly, 1 Cor. vii. 10. 12. 25. Unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, &c. But to the rest speak I, not the Lord. Now concerning virgins, I have

bus autem domini præceptum non habeo, sed consilium do, ut qui is sim, cui domini clementia fidentem esse datum est.' Hic certo palam ostendit, non omnia se ex domini præcepto scribere, sed in nonnullis suam sententiam dicere.

C A P. XVI.

NUNC dicenda sunt quæ contra adduci possunt incommoda. Dicet enim aliquis, periculum esse ne hac ratione detrahatur auctoritas sacris literis, neve eis minus fides habeatur. Ad quod ego respondeo: etiamsi ita esset, non idcirco non esse vera, quæ dixi; aut si quis falsa putet, refellat: quod si vera sunt, ut certe sunt, eis locus dari debet, præsertim propter ea quæ loco suo dicentur. Nunc non ita est, meo quidem iudicio; non enim sita est sacrorum scriptorum auctoritas in

no commandment of the Lord : yet I give my judgment, as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be found faithful. *Here he in the most open manner shews, that he did not write every thing according to the commandment of the Lord, but in some things delivered only his own opinion.*

C H A P. XVI.

I am now to speak of the disadvantages, which result from this method of interpreting the scriptures of the New Testament. For some will say, that there is a danger hence to be apprehended, that the authority of the sacred writings will be diminished, and less credit be paid to them. To this I reply, that if it were so, what I have advanced would not be the less true ; or if any one thinks it to be otherwise, let him confute it. But if it be true, as it certainly is, it ought to be received, especially on account of what I shall mention in its proper place.

But indeed, in my opinion, no such consequences would follow. For the authority of the sacred writings depends not on a nice ad-

in paucis quibusdam locis scrupuloser ad calculos revocandis, sed in ipsius doctrinae tenore atque corpore, quemadmodum supra demonstravimus. Itaque quemadmodum legati auctoritas facta testis manet, etiam si dicas, eum interdum quaedam dicere non jussu principis: ita et sacrorum scriptorum auctoritas nihil diminuitur, si de eis idem dicas, quod de se ipso dicere Paulum paulo ante demonstravimus. Et vero cur illis plus tribuamus, quam ipsismet sibi, nullam causam video; quin id sine vitio fieri non posse puto. Ipse Paulus quantum sibi et ceteris tribuendum sit, non obscure docet, dum ad Corinthios ita loquitur 1 Cor. iv. "Sic de nobis existiment homines ut de Christi ministris et divinorum arcanorum dispensatoribus." Hoc qui tribuit illis, satis tribuit, etiam si illorum singula verba non ad vivum refecet.

Equidem quid aliis accidat nescio; ego hac sententia tanto magis in eorum auctoritate acquiesco atque confirmor, dum eos video ita rei et hominum saluti fuisse intentos,

ut

justment of a few particular passages, but on the tenor and substance of the whole doctrine, as I have demonstrated above. Therefore as the authority of an ambassador remains unblemished, though he may sometimes say things, for which he has not his prince's order: so would not the authority of scripture suffer, if you say of it, what I have just now shewn the apostle to speak concerning himself. And why we should attribute more to the scriptures, than Paul attributes to himself, I see no reason, but much in it to blame. Paul himself shews pretty plainly, in what estimation he would wish himself, and his fellow-apostles to be held, 1 Cor. iv. 1. where he says, Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. He that considers them in this light, does enough, though he does not dissect every word to a nicety, and find out its meaning.

How others may feel upon the subject, I know not. For my own part, I declare, that I am hereby more confirmed, and more gladly acquiesce, in the authority of the sacred writers, when I see them so intent upon their message and the salvation of men, as not to be very

ut verborum non usque adeo magnam habuerint rationem: quæ res illorum testimonia tanto ostendit esse veriora; qui enim sibi sunt veritatis conscii, ii de verbis minus laborant: qui vero mentiuntur, illi summam adhibere solent diligentiam, ut orationis artificio et consensu mendacium occultent.

Sed dicet rursus aliquis: at Petrus docet non hominis voluntate editum unquam fuisse oraculum, sed spiritus sancti impulsu locutos fuisse vates, 2 Pet. i. Item Paulus, 2 Tim. iii. 'Omne scriptum esse divinitus inspiratum.' Ad quod ego respondeo de oraculis illa dici, sicut ipsimet testantur: sed non ideo tolli illam, quam supra ex ipsomet Paulo citavi, distinctionem oraculorum

solicitous about the language, in which they express and convey it. And assuredly this still gives greater credibility to their testimony. For they who are conscious that they deliver nothing but the truth, are not anxious about the words they use. But they who deal in falsehood, stretch every nerve to cover their deceit, by the elaborate composition of their own narrative, and its most exact agreement in every part.

But it will farther perhaps be objected: Does not the apostle Peter say, that prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake, as they were moved by ~~the~~ holy spirit. 2 Pet. i. 21? And Paul, 2 Tim. iii. 16. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. To which I answer; that it does not therefore follow, that every thing in the scriptures is inspired: for this is spoken by the apostle, concerning the divine oracles, i. e. such things as came by revelation: but this does not invalidate or take away the difference and distinction that is to be observed in the subjects recorded in the New Testament, which I have cited above from St. Paul; some of which are undoubtedly inspired or received by revelation, but others are only testimo-
monies

rum et testimoniorum, et humanarum sententiarum. * * * * *

Ita enim comparatum est ut, quæ hæc-
nus hominibus incognita fuerunt, ea prin-
cipio ægre admittantur, quamvis sint veris-
sima; nam adsueta homines veteri vino,
quemadmodum docet Christus, novum non
protinus probant, magisque vetere delectan-
tur. Sed audendum aliquid est, modo verum,
si juvare homines volumus; alioquin si ean-
dem cum iis, qui nihil hominibus profue-
runt, rationem perpetuo sequemur, homini-
bus non magis quam illi proderimus; fit
enim hic quod in morbis, ut si majorum re-
media frustra fuerunt, alia tentanda sint, aut
de sanatione desperandum: fecit hoc nostro
tempore medicorum industria, qui, cum ma-
jores morbum neapolitanum sanare nequi-
vissent, nova remedia, idque alia super alia
excogitârunt, donec tandem ejus sanandi ra-
tionem invenerunt. Vidit hoc Isocrates quo-
que, qui in Evagora eos reprehendens, qui
consueta mala insuetis bonis anteponunt,
dicit

*monies to the facts of the gospel, or human reasonings about them. * * * * **

So it is, that men with difficulty admit at first, what they have been ignorant of, however most true it be. For as Christ says, those that are used to old wine, do not immediately take to the new, though it be better. But we must not be discouraged in our attempts, when persuaded of the truth of what we have to offer, if we would in earnest serve mankind. Otherwise, if we go on in the same track with those who have never benefited the world, we shall like them be wholly useless. For the case is the same here, as in the diseases of men's bodies. If the remedies found out by our ancestors, are inefficacious, we must try others, or despair of doing any good. This has actually been accomplished by the labours of physicians, in our own days; who, when those that had gone before them, could not heal the neapolitan disease, invented new remedies, one after another, till at length they discovered a method of cure. Isocrates also saw this, who in his Evagoras, blaming those, who preferred ills to which they had been accustomed, to untried good, delivers this sentiment: Thus we see, that

dicat hanc sententiam; *Videmus tum artium,
tum cæterorum omnium incrementa fieri non per
eos, qui usitatis contenti sunt, sed per eos, qui,
si quid perperam comparatum est, corrigere ac
mutare audent.*

that improvements in arts, as well as in every thing else, are not made by those, who are content with what they have been accustomed to; but by those, who have the courage to attempt to correct and amend whatever they see amiss and wrong.

For brevity sake, I have omitted above, what the author had remarked concerning the great disadvantages which flow from the contrary opinion and method of considering the scriptures of the New Testament as alike inspired throughout, and from overlooking his distinction of the different nature and importance of the subjects treated of in the scriptures, which he supports with such solid reason.

The conclusion of the whole you will esteem a noble plea for free inquiry into the scriptures, and an honourable justification of Dr. Priestley, in regard to many reflections, which Dr. Horne in your names casts upon him.

A very

A very learned friend, who has lately been reading the third edition of Michaelis's *Enlektung*, or introductory lectures to the New Testament, printed at Gottingen in 1777, and much altered, improved, and enlarged from the first edition, informs me, that this german writer therein expresses his doubts of the authenticity of the *Revelation of St. John*; but what is very remarkable, and which is indeed my only reason for mentioning this circumstance, is; that Michaelis informs his readers, that Luther had also his doubts concerning it; and proves it by quotations from two prefaces, annexed to early editions of Luther's german bible; which have been since suppressed. So that others have been as free in their criticisms on scripture, as Dr. Priestley.

To say nothing of Mr. *Whiston's* frequent declarations against retaining the song of Solomon, as a part of our sacred writings, Dr. *Durell*, late Principal of Hertford college, whom I have cited above, thus freely expresses himself about it.

‘ This

' This poem is generally considered as an
' *epithalamium* composed by Solomon on his
' marriage with the daughter of Pharaoh,
' the king of Egypt. And this appears to
' me the only point of view in which it
' ought to be considered. In respect to the
' mystical sense which it is supposed to
' contain, I must frankly acknowledge, that
' I cannot perceive the least foundation for
' it. This notion, I suppose, was originally
' derived from the *Targum*, and adopted soon
' after by some of the fathers, who, with
' more piety than judgment, thought that,
' as St. Paul compares the union of Christ
' to his church to a marriage, this poem
' ought also to be interpreted with reference
' to the same subject. But how is it con-
' sistent with this idea, that neither the name
' of God, nor of Christ, ever occurs in it?
' that there is not one religious or moral
' sentiment to be found? that it is not once
' either quoted, or most distantly alluded to,
' in any part of the sacred writings? on
' which account perhaps it is not directed
' to be read in our churches. We find also,
' that those who attempt to trace the alle-
' gory

‘gory in every part are soon lost in an intricate labyrinth.’

‘But I seem already to hear it objected, that it is a great presumption to venture to dissent from an opinion, which has been established for near twenty centuries, and has been abetted by great, good, and learned men during all that long interval; and that this novel opinion may tend to weaken the foundation of the church of Christ. To this I reply, that mere length of time is but a sandy foundation for the basis of truth to rest upon; that all that it can in reason pretend to is, to teach us caution before we quit established opinions: but surely it ought not to preclude us from making due inquiries and using our rational powers; or upon due conviction of former errors, from publicly detecting them. In regard to any supposed inconvenience accruing to the christian religion, I really see none. On the contrary, as it is so well established on the sure word of prophecy, which thrones, principalities, and powers, cannot prevail against, it appears to me more for the interest of that religion to quit an untenable post, than to expose it
‘to

‘ to the assault of enemies, who must inevitably soon become masters of it.’ Durell’s critical remarks, &c. p. 298. 299.

It belongs to our subject, and may be of service to you to mention, that this learned man, has in the same work, p. 22. &c. pointed out the true reading of that passage, Job xix. 25, &c. so much misrepresented in our english translation, where it is put, “ *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God,*” &c. He afterwards gives the following paraphrase of the passage, as he has restored it. ‘ I know
‘ that I have yet a deliverer (e) left, who will
‘ hereafter

(e) For translating the original, which is a general word, deliverer, and not redeemer, Dr. Durell in the beginning of his comment on this text, renders this reason. ‘ As I think
‘ it will appear that there is no allusion to Christ, or to the
‘ resurrection of the body, in this passage, it seems better
‘ to substitute a word instead of redeemer, which may not
‘ mislead our ideas.’

I reckon this a valuable criticism, and worthy of being extended to a variety of cases. Ambiguous words in the vernacular translations of the bible, and in public sermons and discourses, should be avoided, where it can be done.

The

' hereafter espouse my cause, even on this
 ' side the grave ; and that after these men
 ' shall have exercised their cruelty upon me,
 ' which I compare to slaying me alive, I
 ' shall at length see God ; whom I shall see,
 ' and my eyes shall behold, declaring him-
 ' self in my favour, and no longer alienated
 ' from me, as he seems at present.' The
 worthy author then adds ;

' As for the interpretation which converts
 ' the passage into a prophecy of the resur-
 ' rection of the body, besides that it implies
 ' a degree of light ill corresponding with the
 ' times, in which either Job is supposed to
 ' have lived, or this book to have been
 ' written ; it requires such interpolation of
 ' new words, and forced construction of
 ' those

The term, *the redeemer*, for instance, which custom in our
 english language has appropriated to Christ, (as also the
 word *Saviour*) should cautiously be used where the Almighty
 Being and not Christ is intended, lest the undiscerning
 hearer or reader mistake you, and carry away the notion
 that you spoke of Christ. So long as the bulk of chris-
 tians, though in words they deny it, do in fact worship
 more gods than one, all such doubtful phrases should be
 discarded by those who are the worshipers of one God only,
 and are desirous to promote that worship.

* those found in the text, that I am fully
* persuaded, with the allowance of such
* liberties, an ingenious conjecturer may
* make almost any text of scripture depose
* in favour of this or of any other doctrine.
* The best commentators have therefore justly
* exploded it. Nor let it be imagined that
* we are undermining the foundations of
* our faith, by withdrawing a support that
* does not belong to it. It remains firmly
* fixed on the basis of truth, which cannot
* be moved, and wants no assistance from
* falshood or error. But neither are we in
* any wise allowed to *handle the word of God*
* *deceitfully*, from an apprehension of the ill
* use, which unstable or wicked men may
* make of a right interpretation of it, at the
* hazard of their own salvation.'

A fitter, or more just vindication could not have been made, of the freedom of Dr. Priestley's discussion of the sacred writings, than in the apology, which this learned author offers for himself, and for the liberties he hath taken with the text, and canon of scripture, in these two quotations which I have cited from him. The doubting con-

cerning the genuineness of any particular part of scripture, or even on good grounds rejecting it, is so far from tending to invalidate, that it confirms the authority of those other parts, whose evidence is not, nor can justly be called in question. You have therefore no reason to be apprehensive that the gospel will suffer from the freest investigations. And if I mistake not, you will by no means be pleased with the alarms which Dr. Horne would raise against Dr. Priestley on this account, and to which he makes you parties, p. 11. 12. of his undergraduate's letter. Stript of the little decorations from my friend's laboratory, which must be allowed to the good president of Magdalen, as there is nothing else to recommend it, the plain amount of what he says, is; that Dr. Priestley first labours to twist the scripture to a sense it will not bear; or, if that cannot be done, to find out some old MS. reading to favour his heresy: if this fails, he makes no scruple of altering the text in an arbitrary manner; and when nothing else will do, he concludes, that the sacred writer

writer was a fool, and knew nothing at all about the matter.

Such general accusations, thrown out in the air without proof, are fit only for the mob of readers, who never think ; and can affect these only. Whether Dr. Priestley interprets scripture rightly, or not ; or discards any part of it without cause, can only be determined by its proper evidence.

SECTION VIII.

CONCERNING THE PERSON OF CHRIST.

The eternal God a feeble suffering man! How the minds of many are capable of being reconciled to such a strange assertion. Throughout the hebrew scriptures, Christ uniformly spoken of as a man, and a great prophet, who was to be born of a particular tribe and family among them. The Jews expected him, and those who received him, believed in him, in that character only. The three former evangelists, and Luke in his second treatise, never seem to have had a thought of Christ being any other than a man like themselves,

themselves, with extraordinary powers from God. The evangelist St. John and the rest of the writers of the New Testament do not differ from the preceding. A singular testimony to the spreading of this true doctrine concerning Christ. The testimony to it of the late Dr. Le Courayer.

IN one place Dr. Horne introduces you thus addressing Dr. Priestley, making himself one of your number, as usual. ‘With
 ‘ the scriptures open before us, we can
 ‘ no more believe that our Lord Jesus
 ‘ was only a man, like ourselves; we can
 ‘ no more adopt your interpretation of those
 ‘ texts, which assert or imply him to be
 ‘ God, than we can believe the Alcoran,
 ‘ or adopt the stories which it contains.”
 Undergraduate’s letter, p. 25.

Dr. Horne may make this declaration for himself, though I flatter myself you will be persuaded; that it does not bespeak him to have much considered the subject. If I be not mistaken, you would have answered for yourselves with more modesty and less prejudice;

judice ; and perhaps in some such manner as this ;

‘ We will consider, Dr. Priestley, what you offer, from scripture, to prove our Lord Jesus Christ, not to be the eternal God, but a man like ourselves. For we frankly own to you, that we have never examined this matter, as you wish us to do. Our education has hitherto led us to embrace the contrary, as a true doctrine, intirely upon the authority of others, without any proper inquiry and conviction of our own. And to say the truth, we oftentimes know not what to make of God Almighty being a weak mortal like ourselves.’

I have no doubt but I speak the natural sentiment of many of you here. And indeed this is a doctrine that would startle with its impossibility, every understanding of man, that was not familiarized to it from the cradle, or that could suffer himself to entertain one free thought about it : and yet with Dr. Horne, and many others, it is the corner-stone of christianity. So strong

are their prejudices, and their minds so fast closed up by the awful notion of Christ being the most high God, first instilled into them, that there is not the least crevice left for one ray of light to penetrate afterwards. From the liberality of the times in which your happier lot is cast, and at your open and pliant age, truth may expect a fairer hearing, and gain admittance.

The general outline of the evidence in the sacred writing, concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, who, and what manner of person he was, I shall lay before you, to be weighed in the even scales of your own judgments: desiring you however to excuse the positive, peremptory manner, in which I may speak of his being intirely one of the human race, most highly favoured of God, which I cannot avoid if I speak at all; so plain appears to me the evidence for it, throughout the bible. You will determine for yourselves, whether there be sufficient grounds for my persuasion.

In

In your researches then first into the hebrew scriptures, you will find, that in all the mention made of the Messiah, and the predictions relating to him, he is always spoken of, expressly, as one of the human race, and not as of any different condition of being; and in nothing beyond other men, save that he was to be the most honoured, beloved (f) servant, prophet and messenger of the Divine Being, that had ever appeared.

If the prophet Isaiah, speaking long before of the gospel-times, says, xxxv. 4, *they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God. Behold your God shall come and save you:* and the like, in other places: We say, God did come, at that time, in and by his servant Jesus, upon whom he put his spirit, xlii. 1. xi. 2. And God truly came, in the scripture-phrase, though it was only the prophet, or Christ, who

(f) Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him. II. xlii. 1. And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, &c. xi. 2.

+ God virtually came to save by sending Jesus Christ; thus he that saw him, saw the Father; - and all were to honour the Son as the Father. And thus X^t was Immanuel, God with us.

who came in his name: in the same manner as God is said to speak, (g) though it was only a prophet or Christ, who spoke in his name.

If the prophet Micah v. 2. describing Christ before hand, says of him, *whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting*: such esteemed critics as Munster and Calvin, who cannot be suspected of partiality, will tell you, that what the prophet intended was, that *his goings forth were decreed from eternity*.

You would never of yourselves suspect, in reading the Old Testament, that Jesus was the God who appeared to, and acted, and was worshiped, by the patriarchs, and Israelites; but you will see, in the course of this work, how this strange notion was brought in, and supported, by heathen converts to the gospel, from whom it has come down to our times, and is still maintained by not a few christians.

Passing

(g) God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. Heb. i. 1, 2.

Passing from the hebrew to the christian scriptures, you find in the gospel-history, that the jews never expected their Messiah to be any thing, but a man, like themselves, of a particular tribe and family, marked out by their prophets. And when he appeared, he was accordingly acknowledged, as a descendant of David, their favourite king; and he himself took to the title.

His mother, his kindred, his apostles, never had the least idea of his being the eternal God, (*b*) but a human creature, like themselves, highly favoured by him. The sacred historians give an account of his birth, from Mary his mother, as being like that of other men, however different the manner

L (*b*) Some have imagined, that the ancient Jews were acquainted with the doctrine of a trinity, and expected their Messiah to be Almighty God himself. See a full confutation of all that the Archdeacon of St. Albans, Dr. Horfeley, hath advanced upon this point, in the eleventh of Dr. Priestley's letters to him, intitled, *Of the time when Christ began to be considered as God, and the opinion of the ancient and modern Jews with respect to the Messiah.*

ner of her conception of him; at first a helpless babe; growing up, acquiring the faculties and powers of a rational creature, by degrees; standing in need of meat and drink, supported in life, as all of us are; subject to hunger, thirst, pain, and at last dying as other men, in like circumstances.

In perusing the memoirs of the three first historians concerning Christ, you will see no reason to conclude, that they looked upon him as any thing more than a human creature, of their own country and nation, raised up for extraordinary purposes by Almighty God (*i*).

You may add, that this is confirmed by the testimony of antiquity. For the christian

(*i*) See a proof of this, not only with respect to these three evangelists, but the whole of the scriptures also of the New Testament, in commentaries and essays, published by the Society for promoting the knowledge of the scriptures, vol. 1. p. 391, under the title of "An Inquiry into the evidence which points out Christ to have been only a creature of the human race, invested with extraordinary powers from God; as it arises from his own declarations, and those of his apostles and evangelists."

tian fathers in general agree in the opinion, that Matthew, Mark, and Luke, treat only of Christ's humanity. But then they argue as if these evangelists knew of his being also a divine person, though they did not say any thing of it; and that they designedly spoke of him only as a human being, and that John, who came after them, supplied the deficiency, by treating of his divinity.

This however is all an after-thought of these men, to account for notions of Christ, which they had taken up, not from the scriptures, but from philosophy, and heathenish conceits of the deity, which they had imported into christianity. For there is no cause to think that the three former evangelists wrote with each others privacy: much less that they had any idea of John writing after them, in the manner that is supposed, and that he was to take one department in speaking of Christ, they another. Unquestionably they teach and tell every thing, which they thought to be of importance for the world to know, respecting their divine master, as if no one
was

was to have come after them, or say any more about him.

I have no doubt but this argument alone will appear to you decisive, that our Lord Jesus Christ was only a human creature, with an extraordinary commission and powers from Almighty God; especially when you take into consideration with it, that there is no ground for the supposition of the early christian fathers, who have been followed in it ever since, that John set himself particularly to treat of Christ's divinity, upon seeing it to have been omitted by the other evangelists; after whom he is generally acknowledged to have written, and to have perused their narratives.

But it will be found by you on examination, and from what will be in this work proposed to you, that John does not differ from the three former evangelists, or speak of Christ as any other than a human being; nay, that he *expressly declares* that it was not his design to treat of any divinity, or any thing more than human, belonging to his master Jesus, except what related to his di-
vine

vine mission, and powers, bestowed upon him.

The testimony of St. Luke in his gospel concerning our Lord Jesus Christ being intirely one of the human race, and nothing more, receives a most singular confirmation from his second treatise, called *The Acts*. This claims your attention the more, as it recites how, and in what manner, our Lord was spoken of, and preached, by his chosen followers after his death and being taken up into heaven. And you will have a particular opportunity of forming your own judgments of the fact, from the examination which will hereafter be given of the last Bampton lecturer's assertions to the contrary.

St. Luke in particular introduces Paul, in his famous speech, in one of the courts of justice, at Athens, declaring to them, that Jesus Christ was a man, (*ανρ,*) commissioned and appointed to a high and important office, under the *God that made the world*. (Acts xvii. 24. 31.) And you will be satisfied, that he could not, and will find, that he does not, say any thing in contradiction

tradition to this declaration, in his epistles. You will particularly perceive, that the *creation of all things* by Jesus Christ, which he therein sometimes speaks of, is no other than a moral and spiritual creation, a reformation of mankind; and this effected, not by any *immediate* personal agency of Christ after he left the world, but by the mighty and effectual motives of the gospel, delivered by him to its first preachers, and the spirit and power of God accompanying them.†

It will be evident to you, from the tract above mentioned, that the apostle John in his other writings, and Peter and James in their epistles, harmonize together with Paul and the four evangelists, in their sentiment concerning their master, Jesus Christ, that he was a man with an extraordinary divine commission and power, and not a superior being, or the eternal God. And as the apostles and all believers, mentioned in the New Testament, appear to have entertained no other idea of him; it was natural to expect, and Dr. Priestley has fully shewn, that christians in general afterwards

† See Mr. Tyndal's judicious embraced
Statement of this in Comment. & Epist.

embraced and continued in this sentiment for some centuries, though learned men soon fell into strange heathenish fancies concerning Christ, and by degrees succeeded in changing the doctrine of the apostles entirely concerning him, as it is upheld in all the great churches of christendom to this day.

This evidence, which I have thus put before you in a summary manner, concerning our Lord Jesus Christ being not the eternal God, but one of our brethren of mankind, being the testimony of all the writers, and all the actors, introduced in the old and new Testament, who have spoken of him, or referred to him; and being, in sound and appearance only, or by misrepresentation or misconstruction, *seemingly* contradicted by a few particular texts; is so vast and preponderant, that it must strike every eye not wholly blinded by prejudice, that looks at it. And though it has to combat the long prepossession of many ages, derived from the learned fathers as they are called, whose writings have been carefully preserved, whilst those of their opponents have been suffered

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to perish; supported by the authority that strikes vulgar minds with awe, that of ancient councils, of great and splendid churches, Romish, Greek, Gallican, of England, Scotland, Ireland, of protestant synods, priests, ministers of almost all denominations, articles, creeds, confessions of faith, ancient and modern, catechisms, &c. Yet such is the force of truth, when permitted to spread its penetrating beams, as at this day in this happy country of ours, that not a few are daily feeling its influence, and coming over from the worship of three or more divine persons or Gods, to the acknowledgement and worship of one first cause and sole benevolent author of all things, one sovereign eternal Mind and Spirit, the single person of HIM, whom the holy Jesus, called (John xx. 17.) his father and our father, his God, and our God; and whom he constantly invoked in humble prayer, (xvii. 3.) as the only, true God. †

It was an unwilling testimony to the increase of the number of christian unitarians, which was exhibited before the public a

† This 'said Jesus' is life eternal. To few know [confess, acknowledge] There ^{to be} the only true God, and Jesus ^{to be the} Christ, whom Thou hast sent? — No other is truly God but the Father, according to our Lord. — There is but one G. D. the Father.

few months past, in a pamphlet intitled,
‘ Thoughts on the progress of Socinianism ;
‘ with an inquiry into the cause and the
‘ cure. In a letter humbly addressed to
‘ learned, orthodox, and candid ministers of
‘ all denominations,’ &c.

In the preface, it is said to have been drawn up for the most part by one person, but that several contributed to it, and all concerned, concurred in the publication. Whoever they were that had a hand in it, the good spirit and temper that prevails throughout towards those christians called socinians, but who differ very much from Socinus, does them great honour, and indeed is almost unexampled since the days of the excellent Tillotson ; who was unjustly accused of favouring their opinions, because he spoke well of the men.

‘ That socinianism hath, for some years
‘ past, say these gentlemen, been making a
‘ rapid progress in this country, is a fact too
‘ evident to need a proof, and in our idea, a
‘ matter greatly to be lamented ; as we can-
‘ not but apprehend that this doctrine robs
‘ the gospel of some of its peculiar glories,

‘ brings christianity nearly to a level with
‘ the religion of nature, and thus tends to
‘ prepare the way for deism.’

‘ We are far from thinking that its abet-
‘ tors see it in this light: some of them, we
‘ readily admit, are men of upright views,
‘ and excellent moral characters, who mean
‘ to serve the interests of christianity. But
‘ this does not alter our views of the doc-
‘ trine itself, nor lessen our apprehension of
‘ its dangerous tendency. We have not to do
‘ with men, but things.

‘ It has been said, *that the great design of*
‘ *christianity is to engage men to live sober,*
‘ *righteous, and godly lives; and that this end*
‘ *is as well secured by the socinian view of it as*
‘ *any other.* The former of these proposi-
‘ tions we readily allow. The latter we must
‘ dispute. The doctrine of the atonement
‘ by the death of Christ, appears to us to be
‘ founded upon such views of the divine
‘ perfections, and to suggest such motives to
‘ universal holiness, as well as to yield such
‘ consolation to the penitent guilty, that the
‘ denial of it greatly weakens the efficacy of
‘ the gospel as a practical system, though it
‘ does

' does not utterly destroy it. And we see
 ' this doctrine so clearly revealed in the fa-
 ' cred scriptures, that it is matter of astonish-
 ' ment to us that any, who receive them as
 ' the rule of their faith, can oppose, or for
 ' a moment doubt concerning it. Nor can
 ' we help thinking, that to reconcile the
 ' scriptures to the opinions of the socinians,
 ' necessarily requires them, to be tortured in
 ' such a degree, as must tend to give to the
 ' generality of readers such an idea of their
 ' obscurity, as is likely to promote scepticism
 ' with respect to their divine original.

' On these accounts *we cannot but express*
 ' *a painful concern, while we observe the pro-*
 ' *gress of the socinian tenets, and apprehend the*
 ' *increasing spread of them*; unless some vigor-
 ' ous methods be adopted to prevent it; and
 ' we feel an ardent wish that you who are
 ' set for the defence of the gospel, would
 ' exert yourselves in order to so important
 ' an object. It is with a view of exciting
 ' you to this, that we presume to publish
 ' the present address.

' Far be it from us to suggest or indulge a
 ' wish, that you should call in the aid of

‘ the civil magistrate to restrain those, who
 ‘ with so much success preach or write in
 ‘ defence of any erroneous opinions whatso-
 ‘ ever. We are fully persuaded, that all
 ‘ have an equal right to think for them-
 ‘ selves, and to publish their opinions in
 ‘ what manner they please.’

In reply to this representation of the tendency of the opinions of those called socinians, I would only observe; that unless it be deism, to believe in a God, and a Providence, and a future *eternal* life undiscoverable by nature’s light, and made known only by the gospel of Christ, unitarians are far from favouring or leading to it. And who are the fairest critics, and interpreters of the sacred writings, and whether the doctrine of atonement be contained in them, and honourable to God, you will have some opportunity of judging in the farther perusal of these sheets.

Much about the same time with the foregoing, was published by Dr. Bell, prebendary of Westminster, a posthumous piece, intitled *Declaration de mes derniers sentimens*
sur

sur les différens dogmes de la religion, par feu

(k) Pierre François le Courayer; in which,
among

(k) He was a person of remarkable simplicity of manners, and sweetness of disposition, and of a constant even cheerfulness, befitting the innocence of his life, and his well-grounded hopes of exchanging it for a better. I lived formerly for months together under the same roof with him, in a noble family, who had been his friendly protectors, from the time of his being forced to fly his country for his religious opinions. What the society of St. Genevieve in Paris is now, I know not: but upwards of 30 years ago, when I saw several of the order both there and in the provinces, they retained a high esteem for this good father, *ce bon pere*, as his familiar friends were wont to call him, and inherited a portion of his liberal spirit. The librarian of St. Genevieve in particular, the same I believe, who succeeded him in that honourable post, deeply regretted to me in private, that load of superstition and idolatry, to which he was a daily witness, and most ardently wished for a reformation.

I saw Dr. Le Courayer in the year 1774, when he was 93, and had lost his sight, but in other respects enjoyed his faculties very well.

At the very moment that this is passing through the press, March 25, I receive a present from the truly learned and my much esteemed friend Dr. Kippis, of his Life of Dr. Lardner, replete with many curious circumstances and facts, which tend to illustrate the writings, and to give us a fuller knowledge of the character of that excellent person. And I cannot but be particularly pleased to find my sentiments

among other things, this learned foreigner, who had taken refuge among us, discovers himself to have been a believer of the divine unity in the strictest sense, rejecting the notion of the spirit being any thing distinct from God himself, and considering Jesus Christ as nothing but a human creature, and the instrument employed by the Divine Being, and invested by him with extraordinary wisdom, and powers. It were to have been wished, that he had dropt intirely

concurring with those of this his judicious writer, with regard to the late Dr. Le Courayer, and the present growing prevalence of the opinions called socinian, respecting the person of Christ. What Dr. Kippis observes concerning the former, I shall transcribe.

‘The celebrated Father Le Courayer, author of the dissertation on the validity of english ordinations, continued to the end of his life in the communion of the roman catholic church. Nevertheless in the declaration of his last sentiments on the doctrines of religion, recently published, he has delivered such views of things respecting the Trinity, as Dr. Lardner himself must have highly approved. The passage is so striking and breathes so liberal a spirit, that I shall insert it below.”

The Life of Dr. Lardner, p. lxi. lxii.

N. B. A great part of Dr. Kippis's quotation is given you by me.

tirely the words, *trinity*, *incarnation*, when he actually and professedly retained nothing of what is commonly intended by them. But he might imagine, that he should thus give less offence, and more easily remove the prejudices of his readers. It is not a good precedent however, and *name* and *thing* were better to be abandoned together.

We are told in the preface, that the manuscript was given by the author to the late princess Amelia, who had the highest esteem for him; and who, at her death, bequeathed it to Dr. Bell. Dr. Le Courayer in putting it into the princess's hands, wished it not to be made public in his life-time, for fear of any disagreeable consequences, and the reflections that might be cast upon him for it. But as that period is past, and he has been long out of the reach of mortal things, and it is apparent that he intended it should one day be printed, the literary and christian world are indebted to the truly learned and respectable editor, for the honourable part he has acted, in not suppressing free religious sentiments; which some have been known to do in situations like his; but fairly producing

ducing them before the public. I shall make one or two extracts from it (1).

A declaration of my last sentiments on the different doctrines of religion.

‘ BEING soon to appear before God, (begins the venerable writer, then in his 86th year) and desirous to act the sincere part which becomes every one, as well as to furnish all, into whose hands this writing may fall, with that testimony which all persons owe to truth; urged likewise by my conscience to declare my thoughts on the doctrines of christianity, and the differences which divide christian societies, I proceed to do it with that simplicity and integrity which become a man in the near prospect of death.

‘ I believe, (p. 5.) that there is but one God; and that his spirit is not a substance distinct from him; and that Jesus Christ, to whom the deity was most intimately

(1) There is a translation of this tract, with an account of Dr. Le Courayer prefixed, printed for Johnson, St. Paul's church-yard.

mately united, is his son, by virtue of that union. This is all the *trinity*, that I find in the gospel. And I have no conception that any other kind of trinity can accord with the unity of God. I know that many of the fathers have had recourse to the multiplication of substances, to give us an idea of this mystery; and others have imagined other systems, which favoured more of philosophy than of the gospel, and served rather to darken the subject than to throw light upon it. But I make a wide difference between these systems and the gospel; and my deep respect for the latter makes me think it of little consequence to adopt notions, which often have much obscurity in them, and are sometimes involved in contradiction.

“ The *incarnation* moreover has nothing in it contrary to the doctrine of the unity of God, any more than the *trinity*. Accordingly, it is extremely remarkable, that neither Jesus Christ, nor his apostles, have ever represented these mysteries to us, as containing any thing incomprehensible, or not to be reconciled to reason. God being
desirous

desirous to draw men from their errors, and purify them from their sins, filled Jesus Christ with his wisdom, invested him with his power, *gave not the spirit by measure* (John iii. 34) *to him*, as to the prophets; but united himself intimately to him, so that Jesus Christ appeared (Phil. ii. 6.) in *the form of God*; who constituted him (Acts ii. 36.) Lord and Christ, prince (v. 31.) and Saviour; by imparting to him his power and authority, made him at the same time a partaker of his glory, so that *he that honoureth the son* (John v. 23.) *honoureth the father who hath sent him*. And thus, every thing being constantly referred to God, and not terminating in Jesus Christ, who is considered only as the organ and instrument of the power and mercy of the Father, it is always God alone who is the object of our adorations; and there is nothing that shocks us in conceiving, that HE can communicate himself to *a man* as fully, and as intimately, as he judges it necessary for his own glory, and the salvation of mankind."

SECTION IX.

Christ's power necessarily limited. How far it is to be supposed, that he passed through childhood, and youth, without any faults or breach of duty. That he was of a nature liable to fall into sin, acknowledged by himself, and declared by his apostle. Of the limitations of Christ's knowlege, and the instances of it produced by Dr. Priestley.

THE inference that I would make from the arguments in the foregoing section, and from these two extraordinary testimonies, is; that as the evidence is so strong and unsurmountable; and all the rational unprejudiced world, who turn their minds to religion and the sacred writings, are seeing it every day more and more, viz. that our Lord Jesus Christ was truly one of the human race, distinguished only from the rest of mankind

kind by favourable circumstances of providence in his birth, by extraordinary gifts of a divine power and wisdom upon entering on his great office and public ministry, and by his consummate piety, and virtue: it cannot be blameable in any one, taking the scripture for his guide, as Dr. Priestley has done, to inquire into the character, and the extent of the power, belonging to this favoured man, and messenger of heaven.

As being one of the human kind then, you will be persuaded, that Jesus the son of Mary, must have become every thing gradually, by little and little; and through the attention, and help of those about him, he acquired the powers of speech, memory, reason; and the different habits which belong to human creatures.

In his progressive acquisitions and improvements from his infancy, to the attainment of such a degree and stability of piety, benevolence, and virtuous self-government, which he appears to have possessed, when he entered on his divine office of teacher and saviour of mankind, at thirty years of age; that

that during this long period, he had, from the first, and all along, been exempt from the heedlessness, and little follies of a child, and never afterwards subject to any neglect or faults, so as to need the being told of them, or to correct himself for them, you will judge whether it be compatible with any idea of a human being, and whether the supposition of such things would detract from our idea of the perfection of such a being afterwards. It is certain, that by the discipline and correction of errors, and infirmities, propensities and inclinations to wrong things, though not allowed or indulged, we learn to dread sin and evil as children to dread the fire by coming too near to it; a habit of vigilance and circumspection is acquired, and we become more strongly disposed to, bent upon, and more lastingly and unchangeably formed to and fixed in virtue and all goodness.

So far as the sacred history says any thing of our Lord's infant state, and youthful character, and improvements, they do not contradict

tradict this idea of their being like those of others of mankind, in similar situations.

St. Luke says of him, ii. 40. 52. *And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the favour of God was upon him.—And Jesus increased in wisdom, and age, and in favour with God and man.*

Of John the Baptist, the same historian i. 15. 80. *he shall be filled with the holy spirit from his mother's womb. And the child grew and waxed strong in spirit.*

It is also said of Samuel, the prophet, i Sam. ii. 26. iii. 19. *And the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour with the LORD, and also with men. And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and let none of his words fall to the ground.*

Now from this comparative language of scripture concerning these three persons, we conclude, that our Lord, like the prophet Samuel, and John the baptist, who had also an especial designation from heaven; was, from his infancy, turned to God, by his providential care, which met him at his birth, and furnished the means
of

of a pious education: and that together with his years, the goodness of his disposition, his piety, humility, integrity, benevolence, increased; and, from small beginnings, were continually strengthened and improved. For these could not, that we know of, be infused, perfect, all at once, into him, or any *human* being; nor do any suppose it to have happened but by a gradual process, in Samuel and John the baptist; the same therefore is to be concluded concerning Christ.

2. You perceive, that similar language is used concerning the divine extraordinary protection over Samuel and John the baptist, as over Christ, though they were characters far inferior to him. But we do not conclude those two men to have been under the immediate direction of God in any thing, except what related to their prophetic office, in ascertaining and fulfilling their divine mission, and was beyond the reach of their natural powers. Neither have we any grounds to conclude otherwise concerning our Lord: but that in ordinary things even relating to his ministry, where natural abilities sufficed, he acted according to his



best

best judgment; which in him appears to have been most strong, acute, and comprehensive.

3. And as these two prophets, Samuel and John the baptist, all will confess, were men liable to fall : so have we no reason to conclude, that Christ was impeccable. He himself appears to have thought, and to have been sensible of the contrary, when under his distressful apprehensions in the garden of Gethsemane, (*m*) he prayed so earnestly to be supported under the heavy trial, lest he should not be able to go through it with proper fortitude, but shrink from it. *St. Paul says, Heb. iv. 15. he was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin.*

If he had not been liable to fall, you will consider, whether it would not have been frivolous and a kind of mockery to put temptations before him ; *i. e.* to put in his

(*m*) *And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed; saying ; O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me ! nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt. Matt. xxvi. 39.*

his way what could not affect him, what would be no trial to him.

Mr. Tucker, the excellent author of the "Light of Nature pursued," though no one, perhaps ever more intirely harmonized with Dr. Priestley in his sentiments on the doctrine of necessity, and the person of Christ, does nevertheless here take a contrary part: and supposes our Lord to have been preserved, in the most intire rectitude, without a wish or desire for instance, of this world's ease, or pleasure, or greatness, from his very childhood, by a continual divine agency upon him. 'This height of perfection,' says he, 'which nature cannot reach, it may be raised to by divine interposition: and the man Jesus having this interposition to assist him continually, might actually be that wise man which the philosophers sought in vain, and which was no where else to be found, but in imagination.' See also what immediately follows, p. 168. vol. viii. (n).

Whether

(n) The same writer adds soon after, p. 170. upon the same subject: 'It was fitting that the divine power should

Whether now it be not agreeable to scripture justly interpreted, and more consistent with, and suitable to our Lord's character
as

'not be joined with extraordinary endowments of body and
'mind, lest the effects of them should be confounded with
'the fruits of moral wisdom : therefore the filial character
'was united to an illiterate carpenter, who, we need not
'imagine gained more knowledge thereby in mathematics,
'astronomy, geography, policy, metaphysics or other
'sciences, than any common carpenter might have attained,
'ed, if we could suppose him never once to have neglected
'the improvement of his talents. What supernatural knowledge he had, was imparted to him, and the wonders he
'worked were performed, by the father, in the same manner as those of Moses and the prophets.'

If I do not mistake, this worthy person seems to speak too degradingly of our Saviour's natural parts and abilities, though I am far from saying that in his situation, they would have carried him to deep knowledge in mathematics, and astronomy. But surely, the sublime simplicity of his instructions, his singular presence of mind and the remarkable aptness and acuteness of his replies upon all occasions, together with the beauty and correctness of his imagination in his parables, mark what we call a fine genius above the common rate.

As to Mr. Tucker's quaint term of *filial character*, which he sometimes also calls *God in his second person* ; it appears that all he meant by it, was the divine power or gifts imparted in Christ. He used this language to avoid offence, and appear orthodox ; when he was, as has been
elsewhere

as a man, to have been so near perfection, as he appears to have been, by the means and assistance afforded him, without such a continual operation upon him, although he fell short of absolute perfection; you will determine, on weighing well the matter.

To those who do not attend to the overwhelming evidence sketched out above, testifying our Saviour to have been originally and truly a man, and consequently of very limited powers, Dr. Priestley will appear to have given a most degrading representation of him, in what Dr. Horne has picked up and put together, in a very uncandid manner, from different parts of his works, p. 16, 17. of his undergraduate's letter. He makes you, who are real undergraduates and commencing your study of the scriptures, parties with him of course: but you will not prejudge the cause, till you

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have

elsewhere shewn, a compleat unitarian: a compliance much to be lamented, though he gave into it from a good design, as he thought. See "*An Historical view of the state of the unitarian doctrine and worship,*" &c. p. 406. &c.

have heard what the party accused has to say for himself.

You have just now seen, what ignorance in many things, Mr. Tucker scruples not to ascribe to Christ; in mathematics, in natural philosophy, &c. Now supposing, that our Lord also, which seems to be the sentiment of Dr. Priestley, had held those called demoniacs in the scripture to have been really possessed by demons, whose disorder we now know to have been owing to natural causes, and cureable, where the cure is possible, by natural means; this would be not the least impeachment to his sufficiency, for his office of teacher of the divine will to men, any more than his ignorance of the true system of the world, since discovered by Sir Isaac Newton.

Put the case also, that our Saviour had applied a text of the Old Testament, as relating to himself, which did not to you, or others, appear to be such: without affirming any thing, suppose only that it was so; it would not affect his character as a teacher come from God: which was not to explain exactly each particle of the hebrew scriptures;

scriptures; but to declare, with authority from God, what men were to do to be happy, and to teach them how to secure his favour for ever.

Among the other things, quoted from Dr. Priestley, Dr Horne brings him in saying, ‘ that the scripture assertion, that Christ *‘ knew no sin*, means much the same with *‘ St. John’s assertion, (1 John iii. 9.) that ‘ a true christian cannot commit sin*, that is, *‘ cannot commit any act of gross sin.*’ I cannot do better than let you hear Dr. Priestley’s own words, lest you should hence conclude, that in his estimate our Saviour was in nothing above the ordinary rate of sincere christians. *Theol. Repos.* p. 445.

“ It will be said, that if Christ’s virtues were properly *his own*, and of course imperfect, he might be liable to *sin*, as well as subject to *error*. I answer, that I know of no inconvenience to christianity, in supposing, that neither he, nor any other man, was *naturally impeccable*. He himself lays no claim to any such prerogative, and the object of his mission did not require it. He says, indeed, to the jews, John viii. 46.

Which of you convinceth me of sin? but by *sin*, in that place, the connexion naturally leads us to understand, *imposture* only: and when he was stiled *good*, thinking, we may suppose, from the manner in which it was said, that more was meant by the appellation that he was intitled to, he expressly disclaimed it, saying, *there was none good but God*. If we interpret the language of scripture rigorously, we must say, that Job was a perfect character: for it is said of him, Job ii. 3. *that he was a perfect and an upright man*.

“It is also said of Zacharias and Elizabeth, *that they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless*. This encomium is certainly equivalent to what is said of Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 22. *he did not sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*, 2 Cor. v. 21. *He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin*. Heb. vii. 26. *Such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*.

“As to those, who lay great stress on the literal interpretation of scripture, and who
think

think that we are authorized to infer from the passages that I have quoted, that the character of Christ must have been almost infinitely greater than that of other men, I would recommend to their attention, besides the passages quoted above, (which, if also interpreted literally, would lead us to conceive of the characters of various other persons, as being equal to that of Christ,) what the apostle John says concerning all christians, 1 John iii. 9, *Whoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.* If this language, respecting christians in general, is not to be interpreted literally, what can oblige us to a literal interpretation of similar expressions, relating to the excellence of Christ's character. And, if in this passage, and every other, in which the word *sin* is used, we are to understand some overt act of iniquity, something that all the world would condemn, as base and wrong, we must likewise restrict the meaning of it in the same manner, when it is said, that *Christ had no sin*; and it is only from the language of scripture, and not from

from any mere imagination of our own, that we can be authorized to form any judgment in the case. *All the virtue that human nature, such as we observe it to be, can attain, I am as ready, as any person, to ascribe to Christ. There is a greatness and dignity in his character, superior to that of any other man. I flatter myself that I feel it, and I am sure that I rejoice in the contemplation of it.* But I think also that I can account for the superiority of his virtue, and the exalted nature of his feelings, without supposing that, till he was divinely inspired, (which I see no occasion to fix at an earlier period than a little before his baptism) he was naturally a greater, or better man, than Abraham, or Joseph, or Daniel."

This extract will give you Dr. Priestley's own sentiments of Christ, somewhat different than you would take them to be from the representation of the president of Magdalen college: not that he intends to mislead, but his prejudices magnify objects.

What he concludes with in that place, as something highly wrong in Dr. Priestley, he

he couches in these words; 'that even
' now, during the interval between his ascen-
' sion and second coming, Christ is *in a state*
' *of pupillage.*'

Dr. Horne must unquestionably be disturbed, that any thing of this sort should be asserted of one, whom he looks upon as the eternal, omniscient God, and the object of prayer and worship; but then, one would think, it should have restrained him from dwelling on the idea in a jocular way, if any real occasion had been given for it; the words, *in a state of pupillage*, being his own.

In whatever language however it be told, the fact is true, that Jesus Christ, who was of the human race, and only brought into existence at the beginning of our christian era, is and must be for ever a learner. You will not be surprized at it, as this necessarily follows from his being a creature, and therefore of limited powers and attainments.

Whatever improvements he made in moral excellency, *viz.* in piety, integrity and benevolence, in the difficult scenes and trials
through

through which he passed, during his mortal state, and we have reason to believe they were far beyond what any others of the human race ever acquired, there must still be room for greater in an endless progression, in his devout and delightful endeavours, in that other world, to know more of, and to copy after, *the infinitely holy, and all-perfect Being*; between whom, and the most exalted of his creatures, though they shall be ever growing in knowledge and virtue, and goodness, the distance will still be infinite, as when they first set out in their career.

Those discoveries of that exquisite symmetry, and art, with which every thing in the world of nature is made, and adjusted; the most wonderful simplicity, in the little that mankind have hitherto been able to trace, of those laws, by which the whole system of visible orbs around us, in one of which we have our habitation, is supported and governed, *prescribed even to hours, minutes, moments*, and adapted at the same time to the best ends, and to general happiness: these views of the infinite, benevolent artist, which

which sanctified the mind of *Boyle*, which led *Newton* to see and adore HIM present every where; which filled the heart of the Swedish philosopher (o) with continual raptures of devout admiration, whilst, with
 immense

(o) The devotional turn of Dr. *Linnæus's* mind, void of all superstition, and truly rational, is seen throughout all his writings, where it could naturally have a place. I give a little specimen of it from the conclusion of an oration which he spoke at Upsal, in 1741, when he was admitted to the royal and ordinary profession of physic.

First, to thee, o omnipotent God, I humbly offer up my thanksgiving, for the immense benefits that have been heaped upon me, through thy gracious protection and providence.

Thou, from my youth upwards, hast so led me by thy hand, hast so directed my footsteps, that I have grown up in the simplicity and innocence of life, and in the most ardent pursuit after knowlege.

I give thee thanks that thou hast preserved me in all my journies, through my native and foreign countries, amidst so many dangers, that surrounded me on every side.

That in the rest of my life, amidst the heaviest burdens of poverty and other inconveniencies, thou wast always present to support me with thy almighty assistance.

Lastly, that amidst so many vicissitudes of fortune, to which I have been exposed, amongst all the goods and evils, the joyful and gloomy, the pleasing and disagreeable circumstances of life, thou endowdest me with an equal, constant, manly, and superior spirit on every occasion.

immense labour, in paths untrodden before, he surveyed the undescribable art and goodness, scattered with vast profusion through the vegetable, fossil and animal worlds, which he was raised up to record and illustrate, and also to make disciples, who should carry on the execution of his plan: these views, he says, of the great creator, which, the holy Jesus's nobler office and employment, in laying a foundation for rescuing mankind from the chains and miseries of vice and ignorance, and bringing them to virtue and immortality, would not allow him leisure to study and contemplate here, will furnish him with new and unceasing songs of praise and adoration.

We cannot refrain, at some hours, from thus making conjectures concerning a character we so much honour, and to whom we are so much indebted, and his employment in that other world, though we must necessarily babble in a great measure, like children, upon a circumstance so much at present beyond us. One thing however we may be certain of, with respect to the place of our future destination, of those
among

among us who shall be so happy as to approve ourselves here to our maker ; that if, upon creatures such as we are, in their beginning imperfect state, such a world as this has been bestowed, furnished with such a lavish abundance of things delightful and agreeable to every sense ; with so much beauty, variety and usefulness in all its parts, that the labours and ingenuity of men, for so many thousand years that they have been placed upon it, have discovered only so much as shews that infinitely more yet remains to be brought to light : what may not be expected from the same munificent hand, when those creatures shall, by his favour to them, have been made more perfect, and worthy of his regard !

SECTION X.

The sufficiency of Christ for his office of teacher and saviour of the world, does not depend upon his miraculous conception. Dr. Priestley's

*ley's reasons for his opinion concerning it.
How the question is to be decided.*

ONE of the charges brought against Dr. Priestley by Dr. Horne, in your names, is, that he looks upon Christ as a mere man, born like other men, the son of Joseph and Mary; thereby denying his miraculous conception.

Now, whether our Lord was the son of Joseph and Mary in the ordinary way of propagation of the human race, or the son of Mary only, by the operation of the extraordinary power of God, is in itself an indifferent matter. In one way, as well as in the other, he would be equally fitted for the purposes of his divine mission, and equally to be honoured. For there is no merit or real worth in being born in such an extraordinary way, any more than in being born of a rich and noble family, rather than that of a beggar.

There is however no presumption against a miracle of this kind, to serve the purposes of divine providence at that time. And one obvious use of it may seem to have been the securing a proper attention in Joseph and Mary to the pious and virtuous education
of

of the child: which was a thing of vast consequence.

But it was not a miracle of such a kind as to be alleged in proof of our Lord's divine mission; and therefore is never mentioned as such. And this, together with the delicate circumstances of the fact, may have been the cause of its being seldom talked of, and not much known, during our Lord's ministry, and in the time of his apostles.

As to the absurdities of the fathers, as they are called, upon this subject, in the following times, they serve to shew the folly of the men, but do not invalidate the fact itself.

The point then in question seems to be, what say the scriptures?

Dr. Priestley, after a very serious examination, and laying the result of it, and his arguments, before the public, is persuaded, that the beginning of Matthew's, and of Luke's gospels, which treat of the miraculous conception, do not contain a consistent account of things, and also have not equal external evidence of testimony for their having been composed by Matthew

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and

and Luke, as have the other parts of their gospel-history. Other persons acknowledge these to be difficulties in reconciling the narratives; but do not think those difficulties of sufficient force to counterbalance and set aside the positive evidence, which appears to them to remain for their authenticity, after all deductions made.† You, who are able, are to form your own judgments. It is of no consequence to us as christians, what is the decision, any farther than as one at least of the evangelists has delivered a peremptory account of the fact, it is desirable to have satisfaction concerning it. There must be a freedom in discussing doubtful points in history, sacred or profane, to come at the truth; in the same manner as in inquiries on natural subjects, you make many experiments that fail, before you arrive at the *experimentum crucis*. If any one can solve Dr. Priestley's doubts, and restore the credit of the history in his mind, no one will be more ready to retract what he has advanced. And if the miraculous conception has been the invention of some early over-zealous christians to do honour to Christ, when this is made

+ See Dr. John Williams's Enquiry into the Authenticity of Matt. I. & II. 80

made to appear, and satisfactory evidence obtained how it was adopted or foisted into the sacred code, in any degree like that which we see of the spuriousness of the text of the *three witnesses*, 1 John. v. 7. all judicious christians will readily give it up.

SECTION XI.

Christ's shedding of his blood, how to be understood. Sacrifices, their origin, and intent. Nothing done by Christ to atone for mens' sins, or to make God more favourable and propitious than he was before. Repentance is all that is necessary to recommend sinners to the divine mercy and favour. Christ's intercession, what intended by it.

VERY much dissatisfied with the explication of the apostle Paul's language of *Christ entering into heaven by his blood*, given in the sequel to the apology for resigning the living of Catterick, p. 90, as signifying only his meritorious obedience unto death, which

gave him admission there and favour with God: Dr. Horne thus expresses himself upon it. ‘But is this the parallel intended by the apostle to the case of *the high-priest*, who *entered not without blood, which he offered for himself and the sins of the people?* Must not *this man* (Christ) as the apostle himself argues, *have something also to OFFER?* And did he not therefore offer *his own blood for the sins of the people?* (himself he had none). He did; and the apostle by the parallel meant to say that he did: he actually does say so. But Dr. Priestley and Mr. Lindsey say, there neither was nor could be any such thing. Their reason tells them, there was no atonement by the blood of Christ; and their consciences, as we are to suppose, tell them, they need none.’ Undergraduate’s letter to Dr. Priestley, p. 42, 43.

Persons who have long been in the habit of imposing on themselves by the use of figurative terms of scripture in the gross, as if there was some great mystery contained in them, may thus talk crudely of Christ *offering his blood*: but you, who are learning
from

from your instructors, and from the excellent Locke on the human understanding, to analyze the proper meaning of words in the authors you read, would not have sat down so contented, but would have tried, if some more light into the matter was not to be attained.

You would have considered, that a man's *entering into heaven by his blood*, cannot be taken literally. *Entering into heaven*, in the case of Christ, you would have found to have been, his being translated from this earth, after having been raised from the dead in three days, to a state of high favour with God, and the possession of immortal life, by the divine power.

You would have next inquired, how could this be effected by his blood, by shedding or offering his blood? Blood itself, the red fluid, is a thing of no moral value. But blood being the life of man, the shedding of it, or voluntary giving up of life, may be praise worthy, according to the motives influencing to it.

What was there then, you would have proceeded to ask, in Christ shedding his

blood, or voluntarily parting with his life, which was so acceptable to the Divine Being, and procured him such honourable distinction, not only for himself to *enter into heaven*, as now explained; but also to be the means of drawing others thither after him, *to obtain (p) ETERNAL redemption for us*, as the apostle speaks in the same place?

The scriptures you would farther perceive, inform us, that it was Christ's zeal, and labours, and fortitude, in preaching the truth,

(p) Redemption is the recovery of a thing by purchase or price of some kind or other, as men were redeemed or delivered from slavery, in antient times, by money paid down for them. Hence the word is transferred to signify a redemption, or deliverance of any kind, or procured in any other way. Thus the Divine Being is called the redeemer of the Israelites, in bringing them out of slavery in Egypt; and Moses is also said to be their redeemer, as he was the divine instrument employed in it. And thus Christ is our redeemer, in being sent and employed by almighty God, to deliver mankind from their sins and the fatal consequences of them, if persisted in. The means used by Christ were the doctrine and powerful motives of the gospel, to which he gave attestation as coming from God, by dying or shedding his blood in its defence. The redemption of the world therefore by Christ, is their deliverance from sin, and restoration to the divine favour for ever by the means and motives of the gospel.

truth, in fulfilling and executing his trust from God, and at last willingly giving himself up to death in confirmation of that doctrine which was of most unspeakable benefit to mankind, that gave him such favour in the sight of the heavenly father. In one place, after having described himself as *the good shepherd*; who took care of his flock; and exposed his life for it, he remarks: *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.* John x. 17; and the apostle says, *he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, &c.* Thus then he obtained eternal redemption or deliverance for us. For his eminent virtue and obedience he was honoured with being made the first and chief instrument of delivering men from a state of sin and death, and bringing them to virtue and eternal felicity.

That Dr. Horne should express an extreme astonishment at this interpretation of the scripture-language of the blood of Christ, is not difficult to be accounted for from his early impressions and prejudices, and by

his having been taught to consider the shedding of the blood of animals and the sacrifices in the Old Testament, as methods of appeasing the wrath and displeasure of God for the sins of men, originally instituted with a reference to the future sacrifice and death of Christ, who alone was held able to make satisfaction for the actual transgressions of men, and for original sin, (*q*) the sin of our first parents, in the guilt of which our whole race are supposed to be involved.

Thus the dark heathen idea (for no other could be its origin) of appeasing the wrath of their false gods, commonly men deified, by the blood of animals, and oftentimes by human victims, has been applied by christians to the most merciful God; as if nothing less than the death of Christ, supposed to be a being equal to himself, could interpose effectually, so as to dispose him to pardon the sinner.

(*q*) *Christ, very God, and very man, truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.* Article ii. of the church of England. See also Art. ix. xxxi.

But by examining the scriptures for yourselves, you will learn, that whatever was the origin of sacrifices, as a religious rite ; whether of mere human invention, or of divine suggestion suited to the gross infant state of the world ; they were nothing more than ways of expressing by symbols, or outward signs, mens' sentiments and reverential regards for the almighty being, who made them, and on whom they depended for every thing ; either in intreating pardon for their offences, or begging the continuance of his blessings and manifold goodness to them, and giving thanks for it.

No value is at any time put upon sacrifices, in the scriptures, but as they were significant of and accompanied with these becoming, correspondent, penitent and devout tempers of mind. This is their constant language. See Isaiah i. to name one instance only. The sacrifice which alone could render the sinner acceptable to God, was not a bleeding victim, but *a broken and contrite heart*. So said David (Ps. li.) when labouring under the guilt of crimes of the first magnitude, murder and adultery.

adultery. He had no recourse to sacrifice, but to repentance, to wipe it away.

Moses, the divine lawgiver of the Israelites, never teaches, that the sacrifices, which he prescribed to them, were types of, prefigured, or had any reference to the death of Christ. This application ingenious men have since invented for him. But he enjoins them as religious ceremonies, or ways of worship, of divine appointment, to keep them from idolatry, and in the worship of Jehovah their God, the only living and true God, and in a just obedience to his laws.

He never informs them, that the sacrifices, or any part of the ritual he ordained, could wash away moral guilt: no, not even that sacrifice which was offered on their annual day of atonement. Their rites and sacrifices were of avail no farther, than to compensate for their breach and neglect of their ceremonial law.

The apostle, Heb. x. 4. thus speaks concerning the sacrifice on their great day of atonement. *It is not possible, that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin.* And ix. 13, 14. *If the blood of bulls and of goats,*
and

and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh ; i. e. being sprinkled on those who were under ceremonial uncleanness, removed those legal impurities which were a bar to their attendance on the public worship : *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God ?* i. e. how much more shall that full assurance which you have of the pardon of your sins, and of the divine favour for ever, confirmed by the blood, or death of Christ in attestation of it, be effectual to reclaim and recover the sinner to the sincere obedience of God's laws.

The greater part of christians, for want of a little light into this subject, have their minds sorely bewildered with the scripture-phrases, *redeemed, saved, washed, by the blood of Christ, &c. &c.* It will be your business, and a high satisfaction to those among you who are intended for the sacred ministry, to free them from this perplexity ; for which, what has been now remarked, will furnish you with an easy clue. When,
for

for instance, Rev. i. 2. Christ is said to *have loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood*; you will satisfy them, that all that is intended by this figurative language, is; that Christ was willing to die for our sakes (as we are also to be ready to die, 1 John iii. 16, for each others good), that by that holy doctrine, which he sealed with his blood or by his death, we might be led to cease from evil, and to become holy and good.

So 1 John i. 7, we are told, *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin*. Nothing can cleanse us from sin, but what brings the sinner to forsake it. And the doctrine and motives of the gospel confirmed by the blood or death of Christ, are most efficacious to this end.

You will tell them moreover, that the reason why the New Testament writers adopt this way of speaking, was merely in allusion to their antient religion, which consisted much in sacrifices, washings, &c. But they used it also, when speaking of other things, and did not apply it solely to Christ.

So

So Rom. xii. 1. we are enjoined to *offer our bodies a sacrifice*. Phil. iv. 19. contributing to the support of the gospel, is held *a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God*. Heb. xiii. 15. prayer is called a *sacrifice*. Now it is readily acknowledged, that there were none of them real sacrifices. Neither was Christ's death a real sacrifice. But in the epistle to the Hebrews, where such sacrificial language is most of all used, the apostle was necessitated and called out as it were, to dwell upon the death of Christ, in language allusive to their sacrifices and hebrew ritual, as his design was to shew the superiority of the christian to the jewish dispensation, and to contrast the real advantages received by the death of Christ with those they supposed they had from their jewish sacrifices; and to point out how far the former surpassed these. It was surely natural for our Saviour and his apostles, as jews, to speak of the things of the gospel in language borrowed from their former divine religion and worship. The great mistake of many of Christ's followers has been, in interpreting literally,
what

what they spake only in a figurative sense,
and by way of illustration.

*And this only to
suit their turn, for in other cases, where their
peculiar dogmas are not affected, they will allow
the force and propriety of bold, figurative Illustration.*

Since Christ's voluntary death, or sacrifice of himself, as the scriptures sometimes term it, was thus nothing more than an act of obedience to God, in attestation and confirmation of his divine mission and doctrine, by which mankind were to be saved, or attain eternal life; you will perceive that it hence follows, that there is no ground for what is called his (f) atonement, or making satisfaction for the sins of men by his death, by pacifying the wrath
and

(f) It is remarkable, that the word, *atonement*, is never found in the New Testament but once, and there it is manifestly a mistranslation, Rom. v. 11. *And not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.* Upon which one well remarks; 'I cannot imagine what should induce our translators to render *κατάλλαξις* by *atonement*, when they render the verb *κατάλασσω* by *reconciling* in the foregoing verse; and in all other places; namely, 1 Cor. vii. 11. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20, and *κατάλλαξις* in all other places by *reconciliation*, Rom. xi. 15. 2 Cor. v. 18. 19.' Taylor on Romans.

and displeasure of God, as some would have it; or, as others, by making reparation for the dishonour done to the divine law by sin, in order that the Almighty might pardon it consistently with his justice. His death in the cause of God and his truth, is a most powerful means and motive to bring sinners to repentance, but can have no effect upon the Divine Being to change or make him better disposed towards us, or to set him at liberty to forgive men, which he otherwise could not have done.

That Christ did nothing by his death, or in any other way, to render God kind and merciful to sinners; or rather, that God is of his own accord disposed to forgive men their sins, without Christ or any other person interposing or interfering, and without any other condition than the sinner's repentance, you find declared by the almighty himself, continually and expressly in the Old Testament, and never after contradicted in the New.

*And the LORD proclaimed, The LORD,
the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-
suffering,*

suffering, and abundant in goodness, and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee:—for they be thy people and thine inheritance, which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron. Kings viii. 50, 51. Seek ye the LORD, while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy on him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Is. lv. 6, 7. When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Ez. xviii. 27.

From these declarations, which contain the constant uniform sense of the Old Testament, it appears, that God would have forgiven men their sins, if Christ's death had

had never happened ; without any regard had to him. (g).

Hence it follows, that there is no ground in scripture for the doctrine entertained by many, that the repentance of the sinner alone is not sufficient of itself to restore him to the divine favour, without something done by Christ to render God propitious to him. For if God was so graciously disposed as to forgive the old world upon their forsaking their

(g) But here it may be objected. What then! wherein is the gospel to be preferred to the law, if the forgiveness of sins was by the latter equally with the former? What benefit have christians beyond jews? I answer: the greatest that is possible to be enjoyed. The Israelites were assured by Moses and the prophets, that God would pardon their iniquities on their repentance. But then they were taught nothing further. It was not told them, that the pardoning mercy of God would extend itself to continue their existence, and confer favours on them in a future world. They had no explicit revelation made of this. But that their being should be continued, and they be made happy for ever, was a revelation reserved for him, who alone brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10. This is indeed properly THE GOSPEL; and it was the notification of so great a blessing to us, of the race of the heathens, which drew from the apostles of Jesus, that exclamation of devout wonder and praise, *ἀπα γὰρ καὶ τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὁ θεὸς τὴν μετάνοιαν ἐδωκεν εἰς ζωὴν*. Then hath God indeed granted unto the gentiles repentance unto life! Acts xi. 18.

their evil doings, without any one's interposing in their behalf; there is no reason to think that any change has been made in the Divine Mind since, but that he is willing to receive the christian to mercy as readily as the jew.

This most important doctrine of the efficacy of repentance alone on the part of the sinner, as sufficient to recommend him to pardon with God, without any interest or interference of Christ, or of any other person, is confirmed by Christ himself.

Be ye therefore merciful, says he, *as your Father also is merciful*, Luke vi. 36. teaching thereby that the heavenly Father, is of himself most freely disposed to forgive us; very contrary to what some assert, that he will shew no mercy, unless the whole debt of obedience be paid by ourselves, or by another for us.

In the prayer he taught, Matth. vi. 12. 14, 15. we are encouraged to expect an entire forgiveness at the hands of our heavenly Father, if we ourselves are penitent, and forgiving towards our brethren; without any other requisite or condition.

But

But above all, the beautiful and affecting parable of the prodigal son, Luke xv. delivered by our Lord, is most decisive, that in his estimate, repentance is all the atonement or satisfaction for the breach of his laws, which our heavenly Father requires, to restore us to his favour.

The doctrine of his apostles on this head, is the same with that of their divine master. It is never declared by them, that Christ did any thing to reconcile God to men, but to reconcile men to God. Men were alienated, turned away from God by their sins: and only on that account, and till they forsook them, God was turned away from them.

You may then conclude, by the testimony of Moses, and all the antient prophets and and of Christ himself, that, if you forsake your sins and turn to God, *you have no need of Christ, or of any one, as a priest or intercessor, to plead your cause, and to reconcile your Maker to you, to dispose him to shew mercy and to forgive you.* For he is, and ever has been, of his own accord, without any

one's interfering, favourable and propitious to his penitent creatures.

So directly contrary, therefore to this, cannot be the meaning of that passage, (cited in the Undergraduate's Letter, p. 30.) Heb. vii. 24, 25; where St. Paul says of Christ, *this man, because he continueth for ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*; and upon which Dr. Horne there complains, and remonstrates to Dr. Priestley, 'We are now
' to be deprived of this most important and
' most comfortable doctrine, for such, Sir,
' we have always been taught to esteem it,
' and such indeed it instantly and unavoidably
' bespeaks itself to our minds, namely,
' that we have an advocate and intercessor
' on high with the Father.'

This refers to what had been observed by me in a former work, and is mentioned before, which Dr. Horne thus sums up, and remarks upon it, as something very monstrous.

' The priesthood of Jesus Christ no real part of his character nor needful to be attended

ed

ed to by his followers ! *If this do not open the eyes of mankind, to see what is coming amongst us, they must continue for ever closed.*

I have, notwithstanding, a good hope, that you will think lightly of the alarm which this well meaning but mistaken person would spread upon this occasion ; and that you are satisfied from what has been said above, that it was incidentally, and merely in reference to the opinions of the jews, to whom he was writing, that St. Paul stiles our Saviour a priest, and speaks of his priesthood, without any thing of what Dr. Horne imagines to be intended by, and would include under, that term.

That the apostle could intend nothing of the kind thereby, may I not say, has just now been demonstrated to you, in the proofs laid before you from the scriptures, that mankind, that christians, stand not in need of Christ, (*b*) or of any one, to go between them

(*b*) ' I am apt vehemently to suspect, that the prayers of our church, frequently concluding, through, or for the sake of Jesus Christ, gives an idea to many persons, that God has no immediate regard for us at all, but bestows his blessings purely to gratify his Son, upon those to whom

them and their Maker, and to do any thing to make satisfaction for their sins, and reconcile them to him: for that he is always, of his own free goodness, disposed to receive his offending creatures to his mercy, upon their repentance, without Christ's, or any other person's interference, in their behalf.

Nor did the apostle design to declare any such interposition of Jesus Christ, when he here speaks of his making intercession for us. And though Dr. Horne would intimate, that you are not contented with the reasons given formerly for its not meaning any thing of the kind, I hope you will see something worthy of your attention in what follows, in confirmation of that interpretation, and that it will be approved by you.

The word, *εὐρυχαλως*, which we render to *intercede*, to make *intercession*, is not found in the lxx. In its original root, it signifies, to *meet*

'he has happily taken a liking: and that by the use of that name, we may move him to do a thing he was indifferent to before.' Mr. Tucker's *Light of nature pursued*, vol. viii. p. 343. N. B. There is no precept in the New Testament for praying or asking any thing of God *for Christ's sake*: nor any example of it. Eph. iv. 32. is a wrong translation.

meet with, to light upon any one: whence it has these derived senses given it, to apply to, to intreat, solicit, to manage another's business, take care of his interests, &c.

Now a due attention to the passage before us, will lead us to see, what we are to understand by Christ's interceding for us. Heb. vii. 25. *It is said wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*

To come to God by Christ, is, to be Christ's true disciple.

To save, or save to the uttermost, is to bring men to the possession of eternal life; which is to be accomplished by giving them the means of obtaining it.

Now it is only by Christ in the gospel, that the promise of eternal life is made to men, the knowledge of the way to it, and the means of attaining it.

So that the means of being saved are, the knowledge of the gospel, and the superior motives, excitements and assurances it affords, to lead men from vice and the world, to the practice of holiness and all virtue;

without which none can be saved, or enter into eternal life.

As to what immediately follows, *viz. seeing that he ever liveth to make intercession for them.* This *ever living* seems to be spoken only with reference to, and in contrast with the jewish high priests, who died one after another; whereas, though Christ died, he was not left in the state of the dead, but made alive again, and always ready to do what became him. And what is implied in his *ever living to make intercession*, or rather, *to manage their interests, to assist them*, is, that the happy effects of the gospel should never cease.

Hence then we gather, that *Christ's intercession*, signifies, *(i)* or consists in, the supplying

(i) Many persons will be forward to condemn it, as a thing quite wrong and arbitrary, to give this construction of the term *intercession*; being imposed upon by the word, in english, always bearing the sense of assisting another by prayer and intreaties. But it was shewn above, that this is only one derived sense of the word in the original, and that it may no less properly signify to manage mens affairs with a third person or assist them in other ways. As I trust, that hereafter it will be made to appear, that Christ's *sitting at*

supplying of mankind with the means of salvation, or of obtaining eternal life.

This he first began in his life time, by his preachings, and instructions to his apostles.

After he left the world, the work was continued and carried on by the gifts of the holy spirit, or of a divine power, which he sent, or which God sent according to Christ's promise, to his apostles and first followers; by which they were enabled to preach the truth, i. e. the gospel they had heard from him, with wonderful effect and success.

And

at the right hand of God, signifies the display of the divine extraordinary power that was made in his favour, or for the effectual propagation of the gospel in the apostolic age; the *making intercession* there mentioned, or as it rather should be translated, the *managing their affairs*, must refer to the gifts of the spirit or of a divine power bestowed upon his followers, during that period. *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also manageth our affairs.* And if, in any passages of scripture, Christ is said to intercede for us, or to manage our interests with God, since the apostolic age, when extraordinary divine gifts were withdrawn; it must refer to the written gospel, the divine instructions communicated by Christ, and faithfully handed down and secured to us by the ordinary means of providence; as he that does any thing by another person or thing, may be said to do it himself.

And Christ's intercession, in this sense of the word, has continued ever since and now subsists in those his instructions, which we very properly stile the word of God, as he received it by inspiration from him; which alone teach the way to eternal life, and which have been faithfully handed down to us, written and recorded by his apostles and apostolic men, to our times; and by which sinners are continually converted, and mankind are taught the way of salvation, i. e. of becoming happy for ever in a future world.

But although Christ's being called an advocate, (*k*) or intercessor, does not imply any personal

(*k*) Under the title of *advocate*, *παράκλητος*, which is not so well translated *comforter*, our Saviour characterizes and personifies the *holy spirit*, (John xiv. 16, &c.) or the divine extraordinary powers, which he promised on the part of God should be sent to his disciples. These divine gifts accordingly were sent, and were their advocate, pleading their cause, the cause of the gospel, most effectually; by giving them credit with those to whom they preached, and influencing them to receive it.

The same title, John gives his divine master, 1 John ii. 1. *If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous.*

By

personal interference, by which he does any thing to reconcile us to God and save us from his displeasure: yet it is a thing not to be doubted, but he that prays for, and in that sense of the word, intercedes for us, in the heavenly world where he now is. He that was so true a friend, and loved us so as to give up his life to promote our happiness, and whom we have a promise of being with hereafter for ever, cannot but be ardently interested for us, and at proper seasons offer up his prayer to God for his brethren of mankind.

But then there is no encouragement given in the scriptures, for any particular dependence upon, or expectation from his prayers, any more than the jews might have upon those

By taking this language in the literal sense, many possess themselves with a notion, that Christ is continually pleading for mankind before God; as if the almighty and merciful needed to be stunn'd as it were with repeated petitions, or Christ had no other employment. But the real meaning of the expression, which is borrowed from human things, is to inform us, that by Christ and his gospel, his followers are as much assured of the favour of God for ever upon their forsaking their sins, as if they had the most powerful advocate in heaven perpetually pleading for them.

those of the prophet Elijah, who they knew would carry along with him his concern for them into the other world, into which he was taken up alive, as Christ was.

✓ Those however, who insist so much on the office and employment of Christ, in praying and interceding for mankind, do not consider, that it necessarily implies his being a dependent creature. For it cannot, without impiety, be supposed, that God should pray for any thing, to any one. And the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, of his being a mortal man, and also the eternal God, and of his praying, as man only, in his human nature, and therefore praying to himself in his divine nature, is a metaphysical subtlety, chimera, and contradiction, which rational beings should long ago have been ashamed of and abandoned.

a chimera, indeed.

You have now seen, that the Divine Being is always of himself disposed to shew mercy to his penitent creatures, that their repentance alone is sufficient to recommend them to his favour, without Christ or any one interposing in their behalf; and that the scriptures

scriptures are misinterpreted and misrepresented when it is concluded that Christ did any thing to reconcile God, or to make him more kindly disposed to us, from his being therein stiled our high priest, advocate, intercessor, or a sacrifice for sin : these being all of them figurative expressions, applied to Christ, and alluding to religious rites and ceremonies, to which the jews and other nations, to whom the sacred writers addressed themselves, had been accustomed, and are to be explained in the manner you have seen.

SECTION XII.

The late Bp. Butler's great error, that repentance alone is not sufficient to obtain pardon of God, without the interposition of Jesus Christ. The melancholy description given by him of the divine government. The sources of his unhappy mistake. His misrepresentations of the world we live in, and its inhabitants. God, and the world, men and their expectations hereafter, far better than his system would make them.

THERE is an author of great and deserved respect,

respect, bishop Butler, whose 'Analogy of religion, natural and revealed', was put into the hands of youth in the university, in my time, and I am told is still much read. The seriousness of his spirit, and his deep concern for piety and virtue cannot be too much commended, and I profess myself to owe many obligations to him on these accounts. But as he takes a direct contrary road to what we have seen the scripture to point out, upon this subject, and through ignorance, charges the divine administration over us with not being so merciful and gracious as it really is, and fills the mind with dark suspicions of the Divine Being himself being under some strange constraints; I hold it of consequence to point out to you his mistakes, lest his authority should prejudice you against the truth.

P. 295. This author says, 'Revelation teacheth us, that the rules of divine government are such as not to admit of pardon, immediately, and directly upon repentance, or by the sole efficacy of it. And a little after he adds, p. 296. Christ interposed

‘ interposed in such a manner, as was necessary and effectual to prevent that execution of justice upon sinners, which God had appointed should otherwise have been executed upon them ; or in such a manner, as to prevent that punishment from actually following, which, according to the general laws of divine government, must have followed the sins of the world, had it not been for such an interposition.’

R E M A R K S.

1. It is allowed, that repentance will not prevent *present* sufferings in consequence of past sins ; it will not secure a man from the diseases consequent upon venereal excesses, for instance, or immoderate drinking. But what ground has our author to conclude, that it will not secure the man from future sufferings. Surely the conclusion ought to have been quite the contrary ; that since the sufferings had accomplished the end designed by them, in making the man cease from vice and become virtuous, therefore they would not continue in the next state, because

cause there would be no occasion for them. The analogy, or resemblance in the two cases is by this circumstance quite altered.

2. What a dreadful picture does he draw of the most merciful God? According to him, HE is bound by certain laws and rules of his government, as the heathens held Jupiter subject to fate, so that justice *must* be executed upon sinners; HE *cannot* pardon them, unless some powerful interposition be made to prevent his laws having their blow at the sinner, and punishing him. How happy is it, that the scripture teaches a different doctrine! One passage, cited by our author, speaks the very reverse of what he supposes intended by it, and represents the whole plan of our salvation and Christ's sufferings, as contrived and appointed by the heavenly Father, out of love to mankind. *God so loved the world, that he gave his beloved son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* John iii. 16. The sufferings and death of Christ are never represented in scripture as the cause of God's shewing mercy to sinners; but as the effect and result of his mercy and goodness;

goodness; a kind expedient, devised by him, to bring men from their sins to holiness, and an immortal life.

3. There is a radical mistake in this writer, but which is by no means peculiar to him, in his language concerning Christ; flowing indeed from his own persuasion, but a very wrong persuasion concerning him, as if he were equal to the Almighty, or some great independent being, in his talking so continually of *his interposition*, *his interposing* to procure the pardon of sins, or to make repentance effectual, by what he did and suffered for men. But Christ speaks with more humility of himself, and of the part he took in the salvation of mankind; and the scriptures uniformly teach, that he was God's servant in all he did, and acted altogether in obedience to him, and with a view to recommend himself to his favour; and that the principal thing that made him acceptable to God, was his love to his brethren of mankind, in being willing to die to promote their virtue and everlasting happiness.

But it may be of use to you, to point out

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the source of bishop Butler's errors, and imposition upon himself and others, in his misrepresentations of the Divine Being, and of his government over mankind.

At the end of his chapter on the importance of christianity, p. 234. he is very earnest to impress upon his readers, 'the obligation of searching the scriptures, in order to see, *what the scheme of revelation really is; instead of determining beforehand, from reason, what the scheme of it must be.*' But unfortunately, he himself has fallen into this very error, throughout the whole of this, and the four following chapters of his work: not indeed by determining before *from reason*, but by determining before *from the articles and liturgy of the church of England*, what the scheme of religion *must be*, without ever properly searching the scriptures to see what it *really is*.

Giving an account of christianity, p. 220, he says; 'It contains a revelation of a particular dispensation of providence carrying on by the Son and Spirit of God, for the recovery and salvation of mankind, who are represented, in scripture, to be in
a state

a state of ruin. That in consequence of this revelation being made, we are commanded *to be baptized, not only in the name of the Father but also of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* : and other obligations of duty, unknown before, to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, are revealed. Now the importance of these duties may be judged of, by observing, that they arise, not from positive command merely ; but also from the offices, which appear from scripture, to belong to those divine persons in the gospel-dispensation ; or, from the relations, which, we are there informed, they stand in to us. By reason is revealed the relation, which God the Father stands in to us. Hence arises the obligation of duty we are under to him. In scripture are revealed the relations, which the Son and Holy Spirit stand in to us. Hence arise the obligations of duty, which we are under to them.

He proceeds afterwards in the next page 222, to say ; ‘ The essence of natural religion may be said to consist in religious regards to God *the Father Almighty* ; and the essence of re-

vealed religion, as 'distinguished from natural, to consist in religious regards to *the Son*, and to the *Holy Ghost*.' He then goes on to speak of the distinct offices of these two divine persons, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and of the religious regards, or inward worship due to each, being equally obligatory upon christians as the worship of God the Father. And p. 225, dwells upon the fatal consequences, and the judicial punishments that will ensue, particularly, from not worshipping Jesus Christ, as God.

REMARKS.

1. You observe that bishop Butler, gives no proof from the scriptures, that the Son, and Holy Spirit are each of them divine persons, or Gods, except what is to be drawn from the form of baptism, Matt. xxviii. 19; which is a very sandy foundation for the superstruction of *two new Gods and objects of worship* upon it. For many indeed have shewn, and it will appear in the course of this work, that nothing of the kind can be built upon it; and that all that is signified by it is, that persons were to be initiated into a religion, which

which came from God, the Father of mankind, and was taught by Jesus Christ his favoured and beloved creature and servant, and confirmed by his holy spirit, or the extraordinary divine power, which accompanied Jesus and his apostles. Not to mention, that the apostles appear not to have laid any stress on this precise form of baptizing prescribed in Matthew, since they usually baptized in the name of Jesus only.

2. After thus making *two new divine persons, or Gods*, without any authority from the scriptures, the bishop proceeds, as might be expected, of course, to talk of the duties to be paid to persons in such a situation, and standing in such a relation to us, the very same with that of God, the Father almighty; and pronounces that the same religious regards and inward worship are due to *them*, as to HIM.

This unquestionably is, and has been the doctrine and the practice of too many christians, now and for many ages; but it was not so from the beginning; nor is it the doctrine of scripture, or the practice of holy men there recorded. For from the beginning to the end, the

+ from hence I ^{R. 3} should think the ~~the~~ ^{bible} Text
spurious.

bible knows only one person, who is the true and living God, nor ever speaks of religious regards, or inward worship, to be paid to *any other person*. No one that I have heard or read of, has ever produced, from scripture, one example of prayer offered up to the Holy Spirit, or Holy Ghost, as a divine person, or God. And the instances wherein worship has been *supposed* to be paid to Jesus Christ, have been shewn, not to belong to him, or to consist only in such worship and respect, as is proper to be paid to a creature of such excellence and moral worth.

3. You perceive to what a degree this learned man overlooks the scriptures, and imposes upon himself: that he even makes the grand distinction and peculiarity of the gospel, to consist in the worship of these *two new divine persons, and objects of religious worship*, whom no rational, unprejudiced reader, can find, either in the Old or New Testament. For one person, Jehovah, the Father, is there spoken of throughout as God alone; and no other beside him is ever named, worshiped, or recommended to be worship-
ed,

ed, by Moses and the prophets, or by Jesus Christ.

4. Nay, he proceeds so far as to make a *new sin*, unknown to the scriptures, like the pope of Rome's sin of not fasting during the forty days of lent; and dwells upon the sad consequences and punishment that will follow hereafter, for not worshipping Jesus Christ as God. Surely he ought to have seen better to the establishment of such a doctrine on scripture-grounds, before he had dealt out judgments against those who do not practice according to it. But he seems to have considered the bible in many respects, as a book, that was to be regulated and interpreted, according to the creeds and liturgy of the church of England.

5. You will observe the same prejudice to prevail throughout the bishop's whole account of the christian dispensation. Without examining into their real meaning, he brings a heap of passages of scripture, to prove Christ to have been a propitiatory sacrifice; and intirely mistaking the design of the epistle to the hebrews, he asserts the legal sacrifices to be an allusion to the great

and final atonement made by the blood of Christ, p. 298, &c. Whereas in fact, as you have seen, Christ was so far from *interposing in the redemption of the world*, as he speaks, or offering himself as an *expiatory victim*, to make satisfaction to divine justice, or appease the displeasure of God, according to the heathen ideas with respect to their false Gods, a practice which bishop Butler thinks to have been well founded, though ill directed; that the Divine Being, of his mere goodness, appointed him to die, that through the confirmation thereby given to the gospel, he might be his instrument in bringing mankind to virtue and the happiness he intended for them: to which our Lord dutifully submitted, and with the most benevolent views for his fellow-creatures of mankind.

But then, Christ herein did no more than we and all his followers, are commanded to be ready to do, if called out to it. *Hereby perceive we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren*, 1 John iii. 16. He made not any satisfaction or atonement for sin to God
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any more than other martyrs and sufferers for the truth of the gospel; for the heavenly Father neither needed nor required any. It is a dishonour and disparagement to his all-perfect character and goodness, and contrary as you have seen to his own express declarations by his prophets, and by Jesus Christ last of all, to imagine, that he is not always ready, of his own accord, without any one's interposition, to receive his creatures to favour, upon their repentance alone.

To illustrate the more this most important subject, I would propose to you the probable reason, as it appears to me, why pious, thoughtful men, such as bishop Butler, Dr. Price, and others, have fallen into, and adhered so fixedly to this gloomy, unscriptural doctrine, that repentance alone is not sufficient to restore sinful mortals to the favour of their Maker.

This I ascribe to their not keeping strictly to the doctrine of scripture concerning the divine unity and the proper humanity of Christ,

Christ, there delivered, in the clearest characters, to all who come not to the reading of it, under a rooted and fixed contrary persuasion.

For, having taken up the notion, which was first brought in by heathen philosophers, who embraced the gospel; *i. e.* that Jesus Christ is God, or the greatest and most antient of beings, next to him; and finding the business and employment, however honourable, of bringing men off from their sins, and making them virtuous and good, not a proper call for such a Being as God, or one next to him, to descend for upon earth and to suffer and die; since this might as well or better be done by a man like themselves, with proper authority from God, and exemplifying his doctrine in his own life and practice, which would be more to their level, and affect men the more: they therefore had recourse to, and adopted that other heathen notion, of their false gods being angry with men for their sins and neglect of them, and needing to be appeased with offerings and victims: and setting imagination to work, and misconstruing and misapplying the figurative,

rative, sacrificial, language of the New Testament, and particularly of the apostle Paul, as if it was to be taken literally, though a mere allusion to the prevailing customs and worship, they *supposed* that there was some bar and obstacle in heaven to be removed, some mysterious demand of divine justice to be satisfied, before sin could be forgiven; that there was a ransom or debt to be discharged, which no mortal could pay; and that it was necessary in order to this, that God himself should suffer and die, or some great being almost equal to him, or mankind must be punished, or perish for ever.

So long as men are persuaded, that there is such an angry power above them, who is so inexorable and severe in his government, they can seldom think well of the world they live in, or that their Maker is so good as he really is.

Of this you see the most manifest effects in the description which bishop Butler gives of man's present state; which he introduces with a supposition, the thought of which makes one tremble; but for which, happily, what-

whatever he imagined, there is no real foundation.

‘ Were we to suppose, says he, p. 297.
‘ the constitution of things to be such, as
‘ that the whole creation must have perished,
‘ had it not been for *somewhat*, which
‘ God had appointed should be, in order to
‘ prevent that ruin: even this supposition
‘ would not be inconsistent, in any degree,
‘ with the most absolutely perfect goodness.
‘ But still it may be thought, that this whole
‘ manner of treating the subject before us,
‘ supposes mankind to be naturally in a very
‘ strange state. And truly so it does. But
‘ it is not christianity, which has put us in-
‘ to this state. Whoever will consider the
‘ manifold miseries, and the extreme wickedness
‘ of the world: that the best have
‘ very great wrongnesses within themselves,
‘ which they complain of, and endeavour
‘ to amend; but that the generality grow
‘ more profligate and corrupt with age: that
‘ heathen moralists thought the present state
‘ to be a state of punishment: and, what
‘ might be added, that the earth our habitation
‘ has the appearances of being a ruin:
who-

‘ whoever, I say, will consider all these,
‘ and some other obvious things, will think
‘ he has little reason to object against the
‘ scripture-account, that mankind is in a
‘ state of degradation.” Analogy, &c. p. 297.

Surely this is an exhibition of the dark side of things, giving a partial and untrue account of our present state. For if every thing wore the melancholy hue, this worthy man gives it, many would say, the sooner a man were out of the system the better. But it is not the fact; nor does Moses in his account of the fall countenance him in it.

That divine lawgiver indeed gives a description of our first parents’ transgression, and of the fatal consequences of it, like a wise and good man, under such images, as were suited to the gross conceptions of men in that infancy of the world, and such as he believed might best deter them in future from disobeying the commands of their creator, upon whose favour their being and happiness depended. But what he makes to be said to Adam, *curst is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life*, seems a circumstance

stance peculiar to our first progenitor, who would be stung with remorse all his life for the part he had acted. We are not thence to conclude, as bishop Butler seems to do, that all his posterity were to live all their days in misery.

What Adam's state was before the fall, we have no grounds on which to build any thing certain. We have no reason however to believe, that it was an indolent and inactive one, since the divine command then was, to *replenish* and *subdue* the earth; which necessarily supposed they were to labour and toil. But labour is not misery, but the contrary. And, notwithstanding this threat, Moses himself promises all manner of earthly enjoyments to his countrymen, if they served and obeyed almighty God. And no nation, I believe, ever was, or could desire to be happier than they were, at such periods when they observed his laws.

Far, very far also is it from being a miserable world, that we *now* live in, but very much the contrary; nor, I apprehend, has there ever been any the least reason to call it so in general, however some individuals

viduals may have suffered much in it. But it is a misfortune to write of things from theory, to form a judgment of all mankind from temporary or local circumstances, from looking only into hospitals, dungeons, or upon the objects that present themselves to the eyes in the streets of great cities ; and not attending to the whole of the case, and counting the millions unseen that are employed and happy. It should be taken also into the account, that pain and suffering are salutary and useful, tending to preserve health and life, and to rectify the moral frame, and lead to virtue : and virtue is happiness here and hereafter.

Should there be found any, whose sufferings far outweigh their enjoyments ; you must not therefore arraign the goodness of their creator, or censure his government ; but consider, that all does not end here. Such inequalities may be rectified hereafter. These cases however are very few ; as there are compensations found in all conditions, which are unknown to the bystander and spectator. We can be certain of no one's case but our own. And yet even here, we
are

are far from being fair calculators : for with ourselves, a very shortlived fit of pain will make whole years of pleasure forgotten.

For my own part, I am bound to say, that my condition has been most happy, from the beginning of my existence to the present day. Happily preserved from great calamities, I have not been exempt from hardships, reverses, and sicknesses ; but the kind hand of providence has been discernible in them all, leading to good by them. I have most particularly cause to speak well of those of my fellow-beings, whom I have been acquainted with, or among whom my lot has been cast, and I would desire no better company for ever, than those I have known; and loved, and esteemed, and heard, and read of ; especially, when divested more of all selfishness, and *terrene concretions*, as Edward Search calls them, which we expect, nay rather are persuaded, will take place in our future progressive state. Indeed was there to be no such state, and all was to end here, though so dark and abrupt a conclusion of the fair promising scene, is not credible, and would be wholly unaccountable,

Mr. Lindley's Confession.

countable, I must, for my part, take my leave, and depart, a well satisfied guest, *satur conviva recederem*; thankful that I had passed so many happy days, and lived, and seen, and experienced so much of the goodness of my creator, and been favoured with the knowlege of so many amiable and valuable characters among my species, though concerned to take a farewell for ever of the one and the other, and to know nothing any more.

Nor is the wickedness of the world, however much to be lamented, so extreme, as bishop Butler represents it, in his gloomy picture. Was it such in fact, much of the blame, I fear, would fall, where least of all he would have wished it, on the religion of Jesus; and it might have been turned into a shrewd argument against its divine origin, which would have had great weight with many minds, *viz.* that it has been now near two thousand years in the world, and so little good done by it.

But it is a groundless, though wholly unintentional aspersiō of divine providence

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and

and the gospel, the effect of a narrow mind, bound down to a religious system, which would not suffer this good man to look about him, and see things as they really are, either in the word, or the works of the great creator.

All these melancholy surmises you will see dissipated in a book that much deserves your attention, for the large variety of curious and useful matter which it contains; but particularly for shewing, that religion and science have been in a state of progressive improvement from the beginning of things: which will contribute to put you in good humour with the world you live in, and make you love and adore its benign author and governor, and his wise and kind administration over you, and over all.

The book is intitled, ‘*Considerations on the theory of religion,*’ &c. by Edmund, Lord Bp. of Carlisle, the 7th edition, 1784. The author’s character is finely touched by an able but no flattering hand, and I shall not digress from my purpose in holding it up to you.

“ A long

* A long life, (says Mr. Archdeacon
* Paley, in the dedication of his Principles
* of moral and political philosophy to the
* Bp. of Carlisle,) spent in the most inter-
* esting of all human pursuits, the investiga-
* tion of moral and religious truth, in con-
* stant and unwearied endeavours to advance
* the discovery, communication, and success
* of both; a life so occupied, and arrived at
* that period which renders every life vener-
* able, commands respect by a title, which
* no virtuous mind will dispute, which no
* mind sensible of the importance of these
* studies to the supreme concerns of
* mankind will not rejoice to see acknow-
* leged. Whatever difference, or whatever
* opposition, some, who peruse your lord-
* ship's writings, may perceive between their
* conclusions and your own, the good and
* wise of all persuasions will revere that in-
* dustry, which has for its object the illus-
* tration or defence of our common christia-
* nity. Your lordship's researches have never
* lost sight of one purpose, namely, to re-
* cover the simplicity of the gospel from

'beneath that load of unauthorized addi-
 'tions, which the ignorance of some ages,
 'and the learning of others, the supersti-
 'tion of weak and the craft of designing
 'men, have (unhappily for its interest)
 'heaped upon it. And this purpose, I am
 'convinced, was dictated by the purest mo-
 'tive; by a firm, and, I think, a just opi-
 'nion, *that whatever renders religion more*
 '*rational, renders it more credible; that he,*
 '*who, by a diligent and faithful examination*
 '*of the original records, dismisses from the*
 '*system one article, which contradicts the ap-*
 '*prehension, the experience, or the reasoning*
 '*of mankind, does more towards recommending*
 '*the belief, and, with the belief, the influence*
 '*of christianity, to the understandings and con-*
 '*sciences of serious inquirers, and through*
 '*them to universal reception and authority,*
 '*than can be effected by a thousand contenders*
 '*for creeds and ordinances of human establissh-*
 '*ment.*'

remarkable words of Arch. Haley.

Another instance brought by bishop Butler
 of the consequence of the transgression of our
 first parents, is 'that the earth we live in
 'has the appearance of being a ruin.'

Did

Did you not see whence it arises, you would wonder that such a thought would enter into the mind of this pious and learned man ; when the beauties of nature have been the theme of serious observers, and constant song of poets, through all ages ; such a canopy, so magnificently adorned, spread over our heads, by day and by night : each part of the globe most plentifully supplied for the accommodation of its various inhabitants, reptiles, beasts, fishes, flies, fowls, up to man, with (o) goodness compleat as well as wisdom. Every thing contrived, with an astonishing profusion, most grateful and salutary to the senses ; and all made welcome to the feast, so it be partaken of with moderation, and thanksgiving to the magnificent donor.

What if you are forced to severe labour to procure these conveniences and delights ?

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You

(o) See psalm cxlv, cxlvii, cxlviii, cl. It would seem hence as if the Israelites lived in a happier world, and under a better and more merciful God, than we christians, if we compare these songs of holy joy in praise of the great creator, with the sorrowful ideas which bishop Butler would inculcate.

line

You are the happier for it. You could not be happy without it. *Man goeth forth to his work and to his labour until the evening*; is among the subjects of praise to the beneficent creator, in a hymn, famous for that admirable sense and sublime simplicity, which distinguish the sacred penmen. Instead of a ruin then, this earth is a palace, most nobly and amply furnished, into which our maker has put us, and but too beautiful and good for creatures just crept into existence, save only that it serves to display his superlative goodness, and to raise our expectations of what he has in reserve for us, in our more improved state, in a future world, wherever it is to be.

How much bishop Butler's views of nature were darkened, and his mind warped and hurt by the unbenevolent religious system he had embraced, you will gather from a remark which he makes, in his *Analogy*, &c. p. 146. 'Of the numerous seeds, says he, 'of vegetables, and bodies of animals, which 'are adapted, and put in the way to improve 'to such a point, and state of natural maturity

‘ rity and perfection, we do not see perhaps
‘ that one in a million actually does. For
‘ the greatest part of them decay before they
‘ are improved to it ; and appear to be abso-
‘ lutely destroyed. Yet no one, who does
‘ not deny all final causes, will deny, that
‘ those seeds and bodies, which do attain to
‘ that point of maturity and perfection, an-
‘ swer the end for which they were really
‘ designed by nature ; and therefore that na-
‘ ture designed them for such perfection.
‘ And I cannot forbear adding, though it is
‘ not to the present purpose, that the ap-
‘ pearance of such an amazing waste in na-
‘ ture, with respect to these seeds and bodies,
‘ by foreign causes, is to us as unaccounta-
‘ ble, as what is much more terrible, the
‘ present and future ruin of so many moral
‘ agents by themselves, *i. e.* by vice.’

You would here reply, that those millions
of millions of insects, that live but a day,
or an hour, are happy during their existence,
and an argument of the goodness that gave
it to them ; and the infinite number of seeds,
which are scattered far and wide and seem to

come to nothing, shew a lavish generous profusion that delights us. But it must have been a most melancholy turn of mind, as well as a very false way of reasoning, that could lead a man hence to infer, that the like waste and utter loss may take place in the human species. Where is the analogy or resemblance, to countenance the frightful conclusion? The one, a being, rational, and capable of virtuous improvement for ever, and therefore its extinction a real loss in the creation: the others, not made for any farther existence, or the subjects of any improvement. But this is only one, among many instances, wherein this author has been misled by *fancying* analogies and resemblances between God's natural moral government over us, and that part of it which he has thought fitting to reveal to us by Jesus Christ.

A more accurate and liberal inquiry into the scriptures, and a juster philosophy, would have given this good man more pleasing views of the world he lived in, and of the gracious being who is at the head of the universe; of his government over us,
and

and our expectations from him. He would have seen HIM, *one person, one* in the most absolute possible sense of the word, *no unity like his*, as the jews speak, and perfectly good; who has declared, that he desires the happiness of all his rational creatures, so that he could have had no other view than this in bringing us into life; and who, or what shall be able to disappoint the desires and defeat the designs of infinite goodness, and power commensurate to it? *I repeat it, who, or what shall*

Without holiness indeed no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. Rational agents must be exercised and formed to goodness by passing through trials and difficulties; at least, we are made acquainted with no other way or method, by which they may be improved, and become lastingly happy. And if they have defiled their natures, and contracted evil habits, they must, by proper discipline, be purified and changed. They must suffer, if not virtuous, and till they become virtuous: for this can only bring durable happiness.

That

That *all men will finally be brought to happiness*, though heavy will be the future sufferings of those who have neglected and refused the means of it in the present state, is not a doctrine of to-day. It is well known that the learned Origen, a confessor for the truth, and a man of incomparable virtue, extended the divine compassion to devils, as well as to wicked men: such was his humanity, and so high did he rate, and esteem the goodness of God. But happily, we find his plea for the former unnecessary, since neither scripture nor reason countenance the existence of a powerful evil being, an utter enemy to God and all goodness, or of any number of such beings.

This sentiment, so worthy of the Divine Being, has been taken up in our own time, by two persons of the first rank in science and virtue: for I do not disparage Dr. Hartley, by putting on a level with him, the man, from the perusal of whose works, Dr. Horne seeks to divert and discourage
you

you. It has also been maintained, in America, by an excellent person lately deceased, (*p*), and is said to gain ground on that continent.

(*p*) "The mystery hid from ages and generations, made manifest by the gospel-revelation: or, the salvation of all men, the grand thing aimed at in the scheme of God, as opened in the New Testament-writings, and intrusted with Jesus Christ to bring into effect: By one who wishes well to the whole human race." (the late Rev. Dr. Chauncy of Boston, in New England; who finished his pious, virtuous, and useful course, Feb. 1787, aged 83.) printed for Dilly, 1784. You will be pleased with the force and simplicity of the following argument from reason on the subject he espouses.

' A very great part of those, who will be miserable in the
' *other world*, were not, that we know of, INCURABLY sin-
' ful in *this*. Multitudes are taken off, before they had op-
' portunity to make themselves *hardened, abandoned* sinners :
' and, as far as we are able to judge, had they been con-
' tinued in life, they might have been formed to a virtuous
' temper of mind by a suitable mixture of *correction, instruc-*
' *tion*, and the like. And can it be supposed, with respect
' to such, that an infinitely benevolent God, without *any*
' *other trial* in order to effect their reformation, will con-
' sign them over to *endless and irreversibile torment*? Would
' this be to conduct himself towards them like a *Father*?
' Let the heart of *a father on earth* speak upon this occa-
' sion. Nay, it does not appear, that *any sinners* are so
' INCORRIGIBLE in wickedness, as to be beyond recovery,
' by

continent. One blessed effect must follow, wherever it is cordially entertained, that it will particularly contribute to extinguish all religious heats and animosities upon the account of differences in opinion, which have created so much disturbance in the world at all times. For how shall I despise or hate, or evil-intreat one, whom hereafter I shall embrace as a brother, and shall behold, equally fixed in virtue and happiness, and no less in the divine favour than myself?

You will be pleased with the following act of devotion, at the end of a treatise upon this subject, by an author (*q*) of the last century. The phrase and diction in some parts

‘by still further methods, within the reach of *infinite wisdom*. And if the infinitely wise God can, in any wise methods, recover them, even in *any other state of trial*, may we not argue, from his *infinite benevolence*, that he will? And is it not far more reasonable to suppose, that the miseries of the *other world* are a *proper discipline* in order to accomplish this *end*, than that they should be *final* and *vindictive* only?’ p. 321, 322.

(*q*) ‘The restoration of all things: or a vindication of the goodness and grace of God, to be manifested at last in the recovery of his whole creation out of their fall, by Jeremiah White. 1712.’

parts, you will excuse, as favouring of the divinity of the times he lived in; but his sentiments are noble and divine. He thus ushers it in. 'I conclude what I have said from the scripture, and on this subject, with this most humble address to God.'

The author's prayer.

Pardon me, o my God, if in the contemplation and experience of thy superabounding grace to myself, I have been transported in my representation of thee beyond thy allowance. I think it impossible to exceed, what I am admiring that grace of thine, which is the highest, the sweetest, the most exalted name of that love, which is THYSELF, and the eternal spring of all love, and loveliness.

I presume not to pry into the methods of thy love, and thy seasons for the full manifestation of it. How far thy thoughts and ways, which are thy infinite wisdom, do transcend, I know not: but sure I am, they cannot fall short of the limited perfections of thy creatures. Thou hast in thy own first make, given me a nature all disposed to love. Thou hast, by thy grace, heightened

beightened and enlarged that love to all thy offspring, to every thing that bears any image or stamp of thyself upon it. I could not, as I ought to do, love thee, if I did not love thee, wherever I find thee. Thou hast commanded me and all thine, to overcome all the evil of this lower world with good. No evil, no injury I have met with in this unkind world, for thy sake, or upon any other account whatsoever, hath yet exceeded my love and forgiveness. Yea, thou hast made it one of my highest pleasures to love and serve enemies. Can I then think any evil in any of thy creatures can overset thy goodness? Thou art the highest example to them of all the goodness thou requirest us to shew to one another. I must believe then, thy grace will sooner or later superabound, wherever sin hath most abounded; unless I can think, that a little drop of being, and but one remove from nothing, can excel in goodness that ocean of goodness, which hath neither shore, bottom, nor surface.

Thou art goodness itself, in the abstract, in its first spring, in its supreme and universal form and spirit. We must believe thee to be infinitely good, to be good without any measure

or

or bound, to be good beyond all expression and conception of all creatures, of men, and angels; or we must give over thinking thee to be at all. All the goodness which is every where to be found, scattered among the creatures, is sent forth from thee, the fountain, the sea of all goodness. Into this sea of all goodness, I deliver myself, and all my fellow-creatures. Thou art love, and canst no more cease to be so, than to be thyself. Take thy own methods with us, and submit us to them. Well may we so do, in an assurance that the beginning, the way, the end of all, is love.

To the inexhaustible fountain of all grace and goodness, from all his creatures, be ascribed all glory and praises for ever and ever. Amen. Hallelujah.

SECTION XIII.

Dr. Priestley's assertion that men have no souls distinct from their bodies, concerns not at all our living again in another world. Dr. Horne
mistaken

mistaken in his proof from scripture relating to it. The popular language there concerning it, how to be understood. Luther's sentiment. The doctrine revived by bishop Law; defended by Archdeacon Blackburne; agreeable to true philosophy and the scriptures. How easy to retaliate Dr. Horne's treatment of Dr. Priestley.

THERE remains one accusation more of Dr. Priestley to be considered, and we shall take leave of Dr. Horne, in his *undergraduate*-character.

A great outcry is made by him; at Dr. Priestley's sentiment concerning the composition of man: because he asserts, that we consist not of a body of matter, and a soul that is immaterial, an inhabitant of the body, that takes its flight into some other regions when we die; but that the whole man is of one uniform composition, and material, and dies together.

It is a popular objection, that man has no soul, and to the unthinking many carries an idea with it, that all is over with us when we
leave

leave the world ; a circumstance, which Dr. Horne is not unmindful to dwell upon.

Of what materials we are formed, is of no consequence, if the conscious living powers, whereby we are capable of knowledge, and of natural and moral improvements, remain after death. And this none more warmly asserts, or more solidly proves, than Dr. Priestley. Candour then should have forbidden the insinuation, and the encouragement of such a report, against one, who is a most firm believer of a future state, and who professes his chief dependence for it to rest upon the gospel : for which he has undergone much obloquy and calumny, from another class of men.

‘ There is a book of yours, says this gentleman, (speaking for you as well as himself, to Dr. Priestley), in which, as you tell us, you have made it as evident as any thing of this nature can be, that the popular doctrine of *a soul* has no foundation in reason or the scriptures, but was borrowed from the heathen philosophy. I, continues Dr. Horne, have been differently

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‘ instructed,

‘instructed, Sir, by a teacher, whose authority is decisive with ME. *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.* Matt. x. 28. (r).

This

(r) You will find Dr. Horne, triumphing without cause, from a like mistake of his own in another part of his undergraduate-letter, p. 35. ‘Mr. Lindsey,’ says he, ‘has decreed that prayer and thanksgiving shall not be directed to Christ, and therefore he is to be stripped of all his offices, which may seem in any way or degree to claim them. It is determined that “the priesthood is no real part of his character, nor needs it to be attended to by his followers.” In another place, to avoid the same conclusion from the declaration, *All power is given to me in heaven and earth, and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world*: the power is explained to be that of working miracles for the first propagation of the gospel; *heaven and earth* are the nations among whom it was propagated; and by *the end of the world*, we are to understand 40 years, being the termination of the Jewish polity, and the period of the apostles’ lives and ministry; beyond which miraculous gifts were not communicated; Christ’s mission to communicate them, if I do not mistake Mr. Lindsey’s meaning, being at an end.’

I have

This is one proof, among many, of Dr. Horne's citing the scriptures without due

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I have no doubt but that I shall be able to convince you, in the course of this work, that this interpretation of Matt. xxviii. 20, is just and scriptural, though so disliked by Dr. Horne. And with respect to the last clause, the limitation of Christ's power here spoken of, so good a judge as the late bishop Pearce, has the following note upon the place. '*To the end of the world*, should rather be, *to the end of the age*; i. e. the end of the jewish age. See com. on ch. xxiv. 3. This seems to limit the promise of such assistance to that period of time.'

Dr. Horne concludes with remarking, p. 37. 'We may have the comfort to reflect, upon the whole of Mr. Lindsey's reasonings, that Christ is no longer with us, no longer interests himself in our concerns, nor even knows what we are doing. And all this, lest we should be guilty of the heinous crime of *praying* to him.'

To this I would reply; How far Christ is now acquainted with what his followers and the rest of mankind are doing, upon this globe of ours, we are intirely in the dark, as much as we are concerning the great prophet Elijah's knowlege of human affairs. I am not conscious of having charged any one with being criminal in praying to Jesus Christ. But if he be not God almighty, but a creature, which last I believe him to be, Dr. Horne himself draws this conclusion for me, viz. that the *whole christian church has been guilty of idolatry, from the very days of the apostles.*

consideration. For our Saviour is very far, in this place, from teaching a contrary doctrine to that of Dr. Priestley, concerning the thinking part of man, that it is distinct from and independent of the body, that he really says nothing at all about it. For the words of the original should be rendered, *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the life : but rather fear him, who is able to destroy both body and life in hell.*

If he had looked to ver. 39. *He that findeth his life, shall lose it : and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it ;* he would have perceived that our english translators render the same word, $\psi\chi\eta$, that is here used, not *soul*, but *life*, as it would not have been very intelligible to say, *he that findeth his soul, shall lose it.* And so in consistency it ought to have been rendered here, viz. *Fear*

apostles. Sermon at Canterbury, before the Archbishop, p. 3. In which nevertheless I think him somewhat mistaken, as the worship of Christ as God, did not begin so soon ; though the foundation for it was laid in the apostle John's days, by some heathen converts, whom he severely reproves in his epistles.

Fear not them which kill the body, i. e. the present life, Luke xii. 4, 5. but are not able to kill the life, i. e. extinguish it intirely, kill the future life: but rather fear him, who is able to destroy both body and life in hell; i. e. can destroy both the present and future life. In like manner, Luke xii. 19. 20. soul should properly be translated life.

Our Lord here considers life as a thing superadded to the body, and of which it was deprived at death. And he appears to have taken his ideas of it from the mosaic account of the creation, Gen. ii. 7; that *the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.* This was the general sentiment of the people of the jews, in all periods, as we find from their history in the bible. Hence you see Martha, the sister of Lazarus, in her dialogue with Christ concerning her dead brother, speaking of him as intirely dead, without life; and that if he was to live again, it would be through a resurrection, by his life being restored again to the body, at the last day. John xi. 21—24.

Whether a man has such a soul or not, as Dr. Horne condemns Dr. Priestley for re-

jecting, is of no consequence, if he has all the conscious thinking powers and faculties denoted by it, and will have them restored to him at the resurrection at the last day; and thereby become the subject of the divine approbation, or the contrary, for his behaviour, in the present state.

And however some may be disturbed at the thought of their whole frame, soul and body, being dissolved, and dying together, our living again afterwards will not at all be affected by it. For *that*, most assuredly, will not depend on the mere materials of our composition, but on the will of the gracious power that put them together.

And it is observable, that in the scriptures, with respect to our living again hereafter, there is no stress laid on our original make and constitution, the immateriality, or natural immortality of the supposed thinking part within us, and the like: but our future life is described as resting solely on a resurrection from the dead, built upon the promises of God, and ascertained to us by the resurrection of Christ, our elder brother.

It

It may diminish the prejudices of some persons against Dr. Priestley, on account of his opinion on this point, that the famous Luther entertained the sentiment of *the sleep of the soul* till the resurrection, which is very near akin to the *having no soul at all*. We are made acquainted with a pleasing circumstance relating to this, by his historian, Seckendorf, in a reflection made by that reformer, upon being told of the sudden death of his friend, a pious and excellent prince, John elector of Saxony; who died of an apoplexy, immediately upon his returning from the chace (s). ‘ God, said Luther, ‘ took him away without pain, like a child ‘ that gently and without apprehension ‘ breathes its last. At the resurrection at ‘ the last day, it will seem to him, as if he

T 4

was

(s) Deus, ait, illi evenire fecit, quod pueris, qui absque cura nascuntur, vivunt et expirant: cum resurrecturus est in die novissimo, putabit se ex saltu Lochaviensi, ubi venabatur, venire. Seckendorf. Hist. Luth. l. iii. p. 30. See an historical view of the controversy concerning the intermediate state, &c. p. 349, 350. By Archdeacon Blackburne; 1772. In which the reader will find amusement and instruction upon this curious subject, such as is nowhere else to be met with.

‘ was just come from the forest, where he
‘ was hunting.’

Did not friendship, affection, and high esteem, preserve, and will long preserve fragrant and fresh, the memory of the truly learned Archdeacon of Cleveland, Mr. Blackburne, the subject, and the name of Luther would call (*t*) to mind this his great admirer, and most able defender of the doctrine of the sleep of the soul; who in August, 1787, at the age of 82, with his judgment, and powers of body and mind in extraordinary

(*t*) He had been for a long time laying in various materials from books, and other sources, and had attended much to the works of this reformer, with a view to have given his life in english; in which he had made some small beginnings. But he was diverted from it at first by another work; and afterwards, by the shock he received from the loss of his second son, Dr. Thomas Blackburne, who was cut off by a fever in his 31st year, and the more, as he depended upon him to complete whatever he might leave imperfect: to which indeed he was fully equal, being a scholar, of fine parts, improved by classical and all other knowledge, besides his eminence in his profession. He was also of the soundest principles, civil and religious, and his manners open, and dispositions amiable and generous as his person was manly, and pleasing:

*Charissimam animam
His saltem accumulem donis.*

traordinary vigour, his eyesight only much impaired, though not wholly gone, expired, without a sigh or groan, in his sleep, as he sat in his chair, soon after having chearfully told those about him, that he should compose himself to rest.

And exactly one week after him, in his 85th year, his antient friend, school-fellow, and member of the same university, Dr. Law, bishop of Carlisle, finished his mortal course, and fell asleep, more enfeebled in body for one or two years, but with the same gentle, pious, liberal and benevolent spirit he had always possessed, and with the most assured, chearful hope of awaking again to an immortal life, on the morning of the resurrection. He was acquainted with, and always expressed a very high esteem for Dr. Priestley, and was intirely with him in his sentiments concerning the soul; and was also the reviver, in our times, of the opinion, that there is no intermediate state between death and the resurrection; but that the two moments of our death and restoration to life at the last day, will be connected together; which seems now very generally to prevail among
those

those who consult the scriptures concerning a point, which *they* only can determine. This worthy prelate had the courage to propose the question of *the sleep of the soul*, to be defended by him for his degree of doctor in divinity, in the university of Cambridge, and made his *thesis* upon it. In the margin you will (*u*) see some small account of this worthy person, as a head of a college; and one or two anecdotes of what happened to him, for the freedom of his sentiments, in his exercise for his doctor's degree; taken from ecclesiastical memorials of the times, by a public-spirited capable observer, some years since deceased, destined by their author not to see the light of 30 years from the time of his death. But this that relates to bishop Law, much to his honour, a part of which only I give you, hath, I know not how, transpired before the time.

I can-

(*u*) 'I heard him, with great pleasure perform his exercise for his doctor's degree, at the public schools in Cambridge, January, 1748-9. Dr. Parne, the moderator *pro tempore*, was his opponent.—One great doctor, head of a great college, refused to sign his testimonial; saying, that he did not like either his person or his doctrine. Yet afterwards

I cannot do better than close this head, with what Dr. Priestley himself says upon the subject, after having mentioned the insuperable difficulties attending the popular notion

‘wards he was reconciled, when Law became head of St. Peter’s college, and made him frequent visits, &c. Archbishop Potter, he told me, disliked his doctrine about inspiration and reprov’d him. Warburton told him, he disparaged the church, by which he got his bread. Archbishop Herring, on hearing of his *thesis* at Cambridge, said to him; “I neither justify, nor condemn you. If your doctrine be right, I am no loser; if wrong, I am but as I was: I am in the hands of a just and merciful God, to whom I wholly commit myself. I believe his gospel, and am persuaded you do so as much as I, though we may have different sentiments about some particulars. We shall both of us, I hope, meet in heaven.” ‘When in going his rounds to the heads of houses, presently after his keeping this act, he came to Dr. Castle, the worthy master of Corpus Christi college, he said to him, in his blunt and honest manner,’ “I know that this is a Socinian tenet; but I believe you deserve your degree, and will readily sign your testimonial.”

‘On Sundays, in the afternoon, he instructed the young men of his college, designed for orders, in the original language, sense, and design of the New Testament, and of the Old, in the Hebrew; &c. and has nothing more at heart than teaching the Christian religion in its native purity and simplicity; of which he was a compleat master.’

Gentleman’s magazine for August, 1787. p. 745.

notion of a soul, distinct from the body, and dwelling in it.

‘ How easy is it, says he, to get rid of all
‘ the embarrassment attending the doctrine
‘ of a soul, in every view of it, by admitting, agreeably to all the phenomena, that
‘ the power of thinking belongs to the *brain*
‘ of a man, as that of walking to his feet, or
‘ that of speaking to his tongue; that,
‘ therefore, man, who is *one being*, is composed of *one kind of substance*, made of the
‘ *dust of the earth*; that when he dies, he,
‘ of course, ceases to think; but when his
‘ sleeping dust shall be reanimated at the
‘ resurrection, his power of thinking, and
‘ his consciousness will be restored to him.

‘ This system gives a real value to the
‘ doctrine of *a resurrection from the dead*,
‘ which is peculiar to revelation, on which
‘ alone the sacred writers build all our hopes
‘ of a future life; and it explains the uniform language of the scriptures, which
‘ speak of one day of judgment for all mankind, and represent all the rewards of virtue, and all the punishments of vice, as
‘ taking place at the awful day, and not before

‘ fore. This doctrine of a resurrection was
‘ laughed at by the conceited Athenians, and
‘ will always be the subject of ridicule to
‘ persons of a similar turn of mind : but it
‘ is abundantly confirmed to us by the well-
‘ attested resurrection of Jesus Christ, and
‘ and the promises of the gospel, established
‘ on all the miraculous events by which the
‘ promulgation of christianity was attend-
‘ ed (x).’

Give me leave to recommend to your perusal the xiith section of this work of Dr. Priestley’s, from which the above citation is made, as affording you such just, sublime, and affecting conceptions of the deity, as are rarely to be found.

In bringing these charges against Dr. Priestley, and his opinions, which we have been examining, and putting every thing in the most invidious light, Dr. Horne has not considered, how open he is to a retort of the like kind, were any disposed to make it.

Suppose

(x) *Disquisitions relating to matter and spirit*, p. 102.

Suppose now other persons should begin, as he has set the example, p. 16, 17, &c.

Marvellous and most degrading, Sir, to us appears your doctrine concerning the ever-blessed, omnipotent, all-perfect creator ; and most painful to reflect upon :

That HE, the eternal, who was before all things, was born in time, of a jewish virgin, 1787 years since, after having lain nine months in the state of an embrio in the womb of his mother :

That HE, the source of all wisdom and power, from being a puling, senseless babe, acquired strength and knowlege, by degrees :

That after having served an apprenticeship to his father, Joseph, at the trade of a carpenter, HE who giveth all things to all, worked at that trade himself, for a livelihood :

That HE, who filleth the universe with his presence, lay concealed for twenty six years at least, in an obscure town in Judea, and was considered all the time by all that knew him, as nothing more than a fellow-mortal :

That

That HE, whom the apostle justly stiles,
 ο μακάριος, *the happy*, 1 Tim. vi. 15. a being
 of the most perfect happiness, was subject
 to hunger and thirst, and pain and suffering;
 was abused, insulted, and spit upon;

And HE, *the living God*, at last put to
 death by his own creatures.

The rest of the incredible story (y), the
 enemies of the gospel will dilate upon with
 pleasure.

(y) Voltaire has done it, in his *Epître à Uranie*, which
 begins,

Long tems vil œuvrier, le rabot à la main, &c. &c.

But perhaps it is no where more fully seen, what advantage is given to the adversaries of the gospel, by maintaining the doctrine of the trinity, and Jesus to be the supreme God, than in a jewish tract intitled *Nizzachon vetus*, published in 1680, and written, as the editor with great probability points out, in the 12th century. In this there are many mistakes concerning our christian scriptures, and much unworthy abuse and groundless calumny; but such arguments are urged against the gospel, on the supposition of Christ being the most high God, as cannot be confuted. A believer of a trinity in unity would not find it easy to make a satisfactory reply to the following passage, which I give in the latin translation; particularly to the jew's inquiry, who was all the time in heaven, and who it was that governed the world, when God was three days dead in the sepulchre. ‘*Amplius quæram aliquid ex te, mi christiane:*
 ‘*Agedum*

SECTION XIV.

Of Dr. Horne's wrong interpretation of several passages of scripture.

From the same concern for you, with which I believe Dr. Horne to have been influenced in his endeavours to divert you from the perusal of Dr. Priestley's writings, I am solicitous to point out to you some mistakes of his own : in the which if you follow

Agedum responde mihi. Tu affirmas filium natum esse ex visceribus Mariæ ; dic dum igitur num pater et filius immundus, juxta cum filio, an vero solus filius in ventre delituerit ? Si dicas solum ibi fuisse filium, quæso annon ipsa se mutuo destruunt verba tua ? cum contendas divinitatis personas nulla unquam ratione a se invicem posse divelli. Quod si dicas tres in utero extitisse, atque ibi fuisse nutritos ; necesse est concedas, quod etiam tres cum hominibus versati sint, ac tres fuerint suspensi. Quis vero toto illo tempore in cœlis erat ? quoniam divisionem nullam admittunt. Quis item per id triduum quo sepulti erant, orbem gubernabat, cum nemo ex iis aut in cœlo, aut in terris degeret ?

Nizzachon vetus, p. 152.

follow him, he may mislead you most capitally, especially with regard to the Being you are to worship.

My remarks will be confined to some of the proofs which he alleges, in two of the discourses of his first volume, in support of the doctrine of the trinity, and the divinity of Christ; and to the extraordinary manner, in which, in another work, he interprets the scriptures, and exemplifies his full belief of Jesus being the most high God, by addressing prayer to him.

In his first discourse, vol. i. p. 9, 10, &c. upon the text, Gen. i. 26, *God said, let us make man in OUR own image, &c.* taking in also, Gen. xi. 7. he remarks; ‘These *plural forms*, thus used by the deity, demand our attention. Three solutions of the question have been offered.’

He then rejects the solution given by the jews, that God speaks to his angels; because, as he imagines, it would suppose, that the angels were coadjutors with him in the creation. This however the language by

no means necessarily implies. And the interpretation is rendered the more probable, as the Almighty is represented as attended with angels, in all the divine appearances on earth. It seems also to be confirmed as being an antient jewish opinion, from Job xxxviii. 7. *Where wast thou, when I laid the foundations of the earth?—when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?* (z)

Another solution, that God is introduced, speaking after the manner of kings, and great personages, Dr. Horne also refuses, though not for any valid reason, as it should seem; viz. for it being unworthy of God to borrow language from men; when in fact it is universally the case
in

(z) [*The morning stars.*] 'They are stiled *the sons of God* in the next sentence. The *sons of God* are the angels, Job, i. 6. ii. 1. I suppose they are called the *morning stars*, on account of the luminous vehicles wherewith they are clothed. The morning star is exceedingly bright. What a grand appearance does the poet here present to our view, ten thousand times ten thousand and thousand of thousands of glittering angels attending the birth of our world, and singing Hallelujas to the Almighty Father.' Scott's book of Job in english verse, with remarks, &c.

in our sacred books, and one does not well see how the divine Being could otherwise make himself intelligible to mortals.

The real state of the matter however is, that there is no mystery in it, one way or other; no ground to think that Moses's language was inspired, but that he expressed things in the way he judged best, and varied his expressions in this sort, for the greater solemnity, as man was the noblest work of God, when he came to speak of his creation.

*See Dr.
Gardner*

Let us now hear, what Dr. Horne has to offer himself upon the point.

‘ What then should hinder us, proceeds
‘ he, from accepting the third solution,
‘ given by the best expositors antient and
‘ modern, (*N. B.* the *best* only according
‘ to *his* ideas) and drawn from this consider-
‘ ation, that in *the unity of the divine essence*
‘ *there is a plurality of persons coequal and*
‘ *coeternal*, who might say, with truth and
‘ propriety, *Let us make man*; and *man is*
‘ *become like one of us*? Of *such a personality*,
‘ revelation informs us; it is that upon
‘ which the economy of man's redemption
‘ is founded; his creation, as well as that

‘ of the world, is, in different passages, at-
 ‘ tributed to the Father, to the Son, and to
 ‘ the Holy Spirit; what more natural there-
 ‘ fore than that at his production, this
 ‘ form of speech should be used by the
 ‘ divine persons? What more rational than
 ‘ to suppose, that a doctrine so important
 ‘ to the human race, was communicated
 ‘ from the beginning, that men might know
 ‘ whom they worshiped, and how they ought
 ‘ to worship? What other good and suffi-
 ‘ cient reason can be given, why the name
 ‘ of God, in use among believers from the
 ‘ first, should likewise be in the *plural* num-
 ‘ ber, connected with verbs and pronouns in
 ‘ the *singular*?

Remarks.

1. I put in the margin an observation (a)
 of Dr. Croft, in his late sermons at the
 Bampton-

(a) ‘Perhaps too much stress is laid upon the expressions,
 Gen. i. 26. *Let us make man in our image.* The plural
 is frequently applied to one only: and the language of
 consultation is evidently used in condescension to human
 infirmity. With the same kind of condescension, we are
 told

Bampton-lecture; that this *plural* way of speaking is not a proper foundation upon which to build a plurality of persons, co-equal, and coeternal, in the unity of the divine essence, as Dr. Horne asserts; we may therefore, considering the foregoing better solutions of the phraseology, dismiss this first argument of his, as having nothing at all in it.

U 3

2. With

told, Gen. xviii. 20, 21. that *the* LORD said; because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrha is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see, whether they have done according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. It is dangerous to rest an article of faith upon that, which may be only a mere idiom.—Sermons in the year 1786, at the Bampton-lecture, by Dr. Croft.

*Could this
Blunder*

I would observe to you here, by the way, that Justin Martyr, a heathen philosopher and convert, one of the first who corrupted the scriptures by bringing in his heathen fancies of a second God, inferior to the one supreme, and making Christ to be that second God; introduces Christ here, Gen. i. 26. as the person to whom God spoke: and makes *him* the person that went down to Sodom and Gomorrha, and *not* the creator of the universe. See Dial. cum. Tryph. p. 153. 159. Ed. Benedict. Hagæ Comitum, 1742.

2. With respect to the argument which he would deduce from the plural termination of one of the hebrew names of God, *Elohim* or *Aleim*, in favour of a plurality of persons in the deity, you can have nothing more satisfactory in confutation of it, than what is advanced by Dr. Priestley, in a masterly, original manner, in his reply to Mr. Parkhurst, at the end of the volume which contains his letters to Dr. Horne, and to yourselves.

But as Dr. Kennicott has stained his noblework, by giving countenance to this weak argument for the doctrine of the trinity, from the plural noun, *elohim*, being joined with a verb in the singular number, in the 48th page of his general dissertation prefixed to his hebrew bible : I shall give you an extract of what a most valuable person, lately deceased, and a master of biblical learning, has remarked in reply to him (*b*).

‘ Let

(*b*) Exodus; a corrected translation, with notes, by William Hopkins, B. A. Vicar of Bolney, and Master of the Grammar school of Cuckfield, Essex, p. 149.

‘ Let the doctor’s premises be allowed, says Mr. Hopkins ; let all the verbs through the bible, when the true God is denoted by *Elohim*, be granted to be used in the singular number, I absolutely deny the argument deduced from hence, to prove a plurality and unity in the divine being : or, to express it in the language of the Athanasian creed, *One God in trinity, and trinity in unity.*

‘ But to consider more particularly the nature of the argument, on which the learned doctor seems to lay so great a stress ; let it be observed, that nothing certain can be concluded from the hebrew word *Elohim* being plural, in favour of a plurality of persons in the godhead, because all languages have words in the plural number of a singular signification.

‘ With regard to *Elohim*, it unquestionably in many instances signifies *one* person, so that no argument can be drawn from it, as necessarily signifying more persons than *one*.

‘ And as the word *Elohim* has confessedly a plural termination, though often used in a singular sense, it is no wonder that the

See Southwold's History.

sacred writers should apply a plural verb to *Elohim*, when used of *false* gods, and a singular verb when used of the *one* true God; which is certainly done with the strictest propriety.

‘ The greek translation of the bible, which was made near 300 years before our Saviour’s time, always uses the word *God*, (*Theos*,) which answers to *Elohim* in the hebrew, in the singular number, when it signifies the *one* true God. The same may be said of the *Syriac* translation, which was made soon after the days of the apostles, from the beginning of the Old, to the end of the New Testament.

‘ Our blessed Saviour was so far from blaming the jews for their using the word *Elohim* to signify *ONE* person, that he has expressly confirmed that sense by his own authority, John viii. 54. xviii. 3, with many other passages to the same purpose. Accordingly, every penman of the New Testament, from the beginning to the end, constantly uses the word *Theos*, which answers to *Elohim* in the hebrew, in the singular number, or to signify *one* person, when it is
used

used of the one true God. And who the *person* intended by God is, appears (not to mention several hundred passages to the same purpose) from the unanswerable words of St. Paul, 1 Cor. viii. 6. *though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth—yet to us there is but one God, (Theos or Elohim) even the Father, of whom are all things, and we by him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

On such weak grounds of an *idiom of speech* merely, and on the mistaken meaning, and construction of an hebrew word, does Dr. Horne's trinity of the Old Testament stand. And yet on this, which is a non-entity, he says, the economy of man's salvation is founded: on this, he asserts, that the human race, from the beginning, worshiped such a trinity as he himself worships; and that, the God of Adam, (p. 13) of 'Noah, and of Abraham, consisted of three 'persons, the Father, the Son, and the 'Holy Ghost.' When the foundation is thus of sand, the fabric must give way *true* and fall.

In

In his viith discourse (p. 191 of the same vol.) upon John i. 14. *The word was made flesh*, &c. he immediately observes, that in the exordium of his gospel, John ‘first publishes, ver. 1. the divinity, and then, ‘here, the incarnation of his most adorable and beloved master.’

But the real fact is, that he publishes neither the one, nor the other; being, as I trust you will easily be able to see, an absolute stranger to both.

In going on to prove, that Christ is the *word* spoken of in the first verse of John’s gospel, our author is equally unfortunate, as he has appeared above, in mistaking the language of the Old Testament. For he asserts, p. 195, “that the *word* of ‘*Jehovah*, is frequently and evidently the ‘*stile of a person*, who is said, *to come, to be* ‘*be revealed or manifested*, and the like. As ‘in Gen. xv. 1. 4. *after these things*, the ‘word of (Jehovah) the LORD came unto ‘*Abraham in a vision, saying, fear not,*
‘*Abra-*

' Abraham! I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abraham said, ' LORD God, what wilt thou give me, &c.'

But you will easily perceive that the word of the LORD came to Abraham here, only in the same way, that the word of God came to John, Luke iii. 2, in the wilderness. In neither case are we to understand, that a person different from God, called the word of God, or the word of the LORD appeared to them; but by the term word, we are to understand a message, or revelation that was given to them, and the person who spoke to Abraham was Jehovah, God, the Divine Being himself; and if Luke had entered into the particulars of the divine message to John, he would have told us, that it was God who spoke to him. So that it is mere prepossession, and ignorance of the phraseology of scripture, that makes any one imagine Christ to be the word of the LORD that spoke to Abraham.

Our author's next proof of Christ being the word spoken of in the entrance of John's gospel, is, p. 196. The LORD (or Jeho-

See Christ's Discourses on the Divine Unity. Disc. p. ^{vab}

vah) revealed himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the LORD (or of Jehovah.) 1 Sam. iii. 21.

It pities one to see such inattention to the proper meaning of scripture-language. Our author here again builds the doctrine of Christ being the *word*, and consequently, in his idea, the most high God, upon a pure idiom of the hebrew language; which, you may truly say, just as much proves Dr. Horne as Christ to be the most high God; *i. e.* it is applicable to neither. For the repetition of the noun itself in the same sentence, instead of using the pronoun, is very frequent in the sacred writings. Gen. xix. 24. *Thus the LORD rained upon Sodom brimstone and fire, from the LORD out of heaven.* See Exod. xvi. 7. xvii. 16, &c. &c. And so the LORD revealed himself to Samuel by the word of the LORD, *i. e.* by himself, in a more particular extraordinary manner than to others since the time of Moses: which is bishop Patrick's explanation, without any such mysterious meaning as Dr. Horne would make out of it. And so Solomon

Rehobam assembled the elders of Jerusalem to King Solomon [to King Rehobam]. Another

Another great mistake of Dr. Horne's, respecting the Old Testament, is, where he says, p. 198. 'that our Saviour is stiled Je-hovah, a name appropriated to the deity.' Such an affirmation ought not surely to have been made without some proof of it given or referred to. But lest you should imagine there is something in it, as coming from a person of so great reputation as a divine, I shall produce and examine the passages of the Old Testament, usually brought to prove Christ to be Jehovah, the self-existent, eternal God.

Jeremiah xxiii. 6. *In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, The LORD (or Jehovah) our righteousness.*

But the words of the prophet are falsely translated in our english version, as a learned man hath observed, whose remarks will be recited at length, in the last part of this work; and we should read them thus: *and this is the name by which Jehovah shall call him, our righteousness.*

The late bishop Lowth's father, who adopts this opinion, has this note upon the passage.

' He

‘He (Christ) shall really be what the title imports; he shall be JEHOVAH, or the true GOD. The title of Jehovah, adds Mr. Lowth, is elsewhere given to the Messias by the prophets. See Isaiah xl. 10. xlviii. 17. Hos. i. 7. Zech. ii. 10, 11. Malachi iii. 1.’ Of these we shall take a brief view to see what they yield.

Isa. xl. 10. Behold the LORD (or *Jehovah*) *God will come with a strong hand.* It is an usual expression, that the Almighty is said to come to men, when he sends his prophets. And at the first preaching of the gospel, to which Isaiah here refers, Jehovah did come by Jesus the prophet of Nazareth, his chosen messenger to men. So that the passage affords no proof that Christ was Jehovah, but only his prophet.

— xlviii. 17. *Thus saith the LORD, (Jehovah) thy ^{deliverer} redeemer, the holy one of Israel; I am the LORD, (Jehovah) thy God.* There is nothing here that belongs to Christ. The titles of saviour, and redeemer, at all times belong primarily to God; and to Christ only in a subordinate sense.

Hosea

Hosea i. 7. *But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and will save them by the LORD their God.* i. e. will save them by myself: the noun repeated, as above, instead of the pronoun. Christ is not at all concerned here.

Zechariah ii. 10, 11. *Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the LORD, (Jehovah) and many nations shall be joined to the LORD in that day, and shall be my people, and I will dwell in the midst of them, and thou shalt know that the LORD of hosts hath sent me unto thee.*

The former part of this passage, if it be spoken of the times of the gospel, relates to the extraordinary divine powers given to Christ and his apostles: but the last seem to be the words of the angel, mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, declaring, that they should be fully convinced, that the extraordinary hand of divine providence was concerned in bringing about those events. Mr. Lowth, I suppose, would have them to signify, that one Jehovah, one eternal God had sent another eternal God.

Malachi

Malachi iii. 1. *Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me ; (and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple) even the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in : behold, he shall come, saith LORD of hosts.*

Here is a description of Christ's coming, but no proof of his being Jehovah. The Lord here spoken of, *Adon*, is almighty God himself, whose alone the temple was ; and which Christ calls (Matth. xii. 4.) *the house of God*, and John ii. 16.) *my Father's house*.

You hence learn, how little you can depend upon the best commentators, and most learned men. That accomplished scholar, and son of this worthy commentator, bishop Lowth, lately deceased, has given into an almost incredible weakness, in his valuable new version of, and commentary on Isaiah, as I have pointed out in (c) another place ; in making the *threefold* repetition of the word *boly*, in the hymn of the angelic beings, Isa. vi. 3. to be a *demonstration of the mystery of*

(c) Examination of Mr. Robinson of Cambridge's plea for the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. p. 98.

of the trinity in the divine unity. This I take the present opportunity of repeating, lest such names as his, should oversway your judgments.

More extraordinary still, is what immediately follows in Dr. Horne, where he produces, *I am alpha and omega, the first and the last*, Rev. i. 11. as a proof of Christ being the most high God; and to corroborate it, says; 'Upon this passage, which is found Rev. i. 11, Dr. Doddridge has the following note: "that these titles (which occur just above in ver. 8. (t)) should be repeated so soon in a connection which demonstrates they are given to Christ, will appear very remarkable, whatever sense be given to the 8th verse. The argument drawn in the preceding note upon it, would have been strong, wherever such a passage as this had been found: but its immediate connection with this, greatly strengthens it. And I cannot forbear recording it, that this text has done more than any other in

(t) The 8th verse is. *I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord; which is, and which was, and which is to come.*

‘ in the bible, towards preventing me from
‘ giving into that scheme, which would
‘ make our Lord Jesus Christ no more than
‘ a deified creature.’

Thus we have here a confession, that this passage was what principally contributed to make this celebrated presbyterian divine regard Christ as the most high God, and not a creature; and it is brought in by the dean of Canterbury as what confirms him in the same belief.

But unluckily for them, this passage, on which they both build so much, is a nullity; owing to inadvertence, or a designed interpolation of some transcriber, and not from the pen of the sacred writer.

One wonders, that the proofs exhibited by Mill, and Bengelius, of the spuriousness of this passage, had no effect on Dr. Dodridge. But Dr. Horne's inattention is more extraordinary, who has had an opportunity of knowing what has been further produced to shew that it is not genuine, by Wetstein, and Griesbach. This last most learned man, though himself a believer in the trinity and the divinity of Christ, has had
the

the courage and integrity, in his valuable edition of the Greek N. Testament, to leave out this passage, as also the spurious text of the three witnesses, 1 John v. 7. as not being any part of scripture. I put Wetstein's and Griesbach's authorities relating to it in the (g) margin, whence you see that the passage on which Dr. Horne builds so much, is not in the Alexandrian, Vatican, and royal Parisian manuscript-copies of the New Testament, nor in several others; that it has no place in several of the most ancient versions of the New Testament; and on these accounts has been very properly omitted in several printed editions of the Greek Testament.

Dr. Horne is no less in error in affirming Christ to be the *word* spoken of in the pre-

X 2

face

(g) "AC 2. 4. 8. 9. 10. 11. 13. 14. 17. 18. 19. 25
'26. 27. 28. Editio Complut. Plantin. Genev. Bengelii.
'Versio Vulg. Syr. Copt. Armen. Æthiop. Aretbas. An-
'dreas, probante J. Millio.' Wetstein in loc.

'ABC. 2. 9. 10. 14. al. 13. Ed. Syr. (non Arr.)
'Copt. Æth. Arm. Vulg. Areth. Andr. MS. 'Primas.'
Griesbach.

face of John's gospel, and as such, the supreme God. For this term, *logos*, *word*, might more properly be translated, *reason*, *wisdom*; and it is not here (nor indeed any where) (*q*) a name of Christ, but an attribute of God, his wisdom; and God is thus denominated by his wisdom, his word, or power; which is a phrase of speech very frequent with the hebrews, the word of the LORD, the word of God, the wisdom of God, signifying God himself. And so in Proverbs viii. Solomon speaks of wisdom as a person that was with God before and when he created the world; intending thereby only to signify in a more lively animated manner, that God made all things and governs them by the most perfect wisdom.

But

(*q*) A controversial writer of the times, having asserted, that "in Rev. xix. 13. Christ is termed the *word* of God; and that every one knows, that he is more frequently so styled in the uncontested writings of St. John than elsewhere." Dr. Lardner remarks: "Though Mr. Twells says, *every one* knows this; I must entreat him to make an exception for me, till somebody has shewn me the several texts of St. John's uncontested writings, where Christ is so called: for, at present, I do not know one."

Lardner's Credibility, p. ii. vol. iv. p. 71.

But in the second part of this work, you will find this proem of John's gospel, or what he says as from himself, in the beginning of his gospel, not to be descriptive of Christ, but of almighty God himself, as the sole creator of all things, and dispenser of light and knowlege, in different ways, and at different times, to his creatures, but last of all, in the fullest manner, by Jesus Christ.

The word, proceeds the apostle, ver. 14. (i. e. not Christ, but the divine wisdom), was made, or was a man, a mortal creature : for that is the meaning of the term *flesh* (s)

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here ;

(s) *Flesh* is put for man as mortal. Pl. lx. v. 2. Is. xl. 5, 6. Matt. xxiv. 22. Gal. ii. 16. See also John xvii. 2. 1 Cor. i. 29, &c. &c. The language therefore commonly used, viz. God *incarnate*, the word *incarnate*, the *incarnation* of Christ, is as gross and disgusting, as it is wholly unscriptural ; as if the Divine Being, or Christ considered as the first of angelic beings, were shut up in a case of flesh and blood. Such unwarranted expressions therefore, however venerable for their antiquity, ought to be given up. St. Paul declares most distinctly, 1 Cor. xv. *Flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. Dr. Horne however, such are his prejudices, sends the Almighty himself to heaven, clothed in flesh and blood. ' God *incarnate*, (says he) is gone up into ' that holy place not made with hands ; the everlasting doors ' of heaven are opened for the king of glory to enter, and ' repossess his antient throne,' &c. Comment. on Psalm xlvii. 5.

here; and so, to avoid a harsh ambiguity to common readers, it would be better to translate it. If you want to have this explained, the apostle goes on to do it for you.

The word, says he, *or wisdom was made, or was (flesh) a man, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the well-beloved of the father, full of grace and truth: i. e.* The divine wisdom was in the man Christ Jesus, and by him dwelt among us; being communicated to him in a degree never before communicated to mortals: *and we* (his apostles) *saw his glory*, were witnesses of the extraordinary gifts of a divine power bestowed upon him; *the glory as of the well-beloved of the Father*; i. e. such high divine communications as bespoke him to be most highly approved by, and beloved of the supreme Father of all.

In the same discourse, p. 204, Dr. Horne says; ‘The apostle to the hebrews, writing on the subject of *the incarnation*, thus expresseth himself, *he taketh not hold of angels, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham*;

‘*Abraham*; i. e. he took or assumed the
‘manhood into God.’

One is concerned to see such an intire want of attention to the real meaning of the scripture, and right interpretation of it. For so far is the apostle from writing here upon the subject of the *incarnation*, that there is nothing that indicates that he had ever any idea of such a thing in his mind here, or any where. What may be supposed to have led Dr. Horne into such a mistake, is his implicitly following our very wrong english translation of this and the foregoing verse, which a scholar and one that undertakes to teach truth to others should not have done. I have put our common english and the true version in the margin (w) in opposite columns; from

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which

(w) Heb. ii. 14.

Common Version.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same.

For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

True Version.

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner was a partaker of the same.

For verily he helpeth not angels; but he helpeth the seed of Abraham.

which you will perceive that the apostle is so far from treating of what Dr. Horne calls the *incarnation*, that he in express words asserts, that Jesus was a human creature, like all the rest of us. I have also subjoined (x) Hardy's notes on the two verses, to the same purpose, because he generally favours the divinity of Christ in his interpretations, and therefore will be the less suspected of partiality.

SECTION XV.

Of Dr. Horne's commentary on the psalms.

Difficulty of the prophetic writings. A caution concerning them. Dr. Horne's wrong method of interpretation. Various instances of it. Remarks on them.

OUR author's other work, on which I am to make some observations, seems to have

(x) Ver. 14. *Ipse similiter particeps factus est eorum*, i. e. mortalis homo, et miseriis obnoxius. Ver. 16. *καυχόμενος* proprie aliquem manu apprehendere, significat, et hinc ad opulationem significandum commode transfertur.

have been a very popular one, from its having come to a third edition. But although composed by him with a good design, it is liable to vast objections, from his very wrong method of interpreting the scriptures, and from his drawing aside and misleading his readers, from the worship of the true God. It is intituled;

‘ A commentary on the book of psalms.’

‘ *In which their literal or historical sense, as they relate to king David, and the people of Israel, is illustrated; and their application to Messiah, to the church, and to individuals, as members thereof, is pointed out; with a view to render the use of the psalter pleasing and profitable to all orders and degrees of christians.*

By George Horne, D.D. &c.’

It is assuredly a most becoming employment for a divine, and doing a real service to christianity, to endeavour to illustrate such of these sacred hymns as contain prophecies of Christ, and really relate to him. But too much caution cannot be used upon a subject, where there is so great danger of being deluded by a warm imagination. And therefore in the interpretation of this part
of

of the sacred writings, as indeed of all others whatsoever, we should take it as a thing certain, that no writer has any more than one subject in his thoughts at a time to discuss, and one sense to be fixed to his words; (unless he himself, or some one properly authorized indicate the contrary :) and this one sense, which his words plainly convey we are to find out by the help of just criticism, and adhere to and rest in it.

This is acting in agreement with that golden rule of interpretation, as Mosheim well styles it, vol. iv. p. 21. inculcated by Luther; viz. that *there is no more than one sense annexed to the words of scripture, throughout all the books of the Old and New Testament.*

But Dr. Horne forsaking these wise cautions and directions from the first, and paying little regard to the plain and literal meaning of the psalms, employs himself in exhibiting their secret meaning and reference to Christ, intirely as it should seem from the fund of his own imagination: for he gives no proof that any such mystic sense was intended by their respective writers. In this way of interpreta-

interpretation, by which any thing may be made out of any thing, he very easily finds, as may be supposed, all his own peculiar notions and doctrines, largely and continually displayed in these sacred songs; whilst others can discover nothing of the sort, neither in them, nor throughout the whole bible.

It may be proper to produce a few examples of his manner and method.

In his comment on the first verse of the first psalm, he brings in at the end of it, the doctrine of imputed righteousness as it is called, in a very singular manner, and though the words of the sacred writer himself inculcates the contrary. *O thou second Adam, says Dr. Horne, who alone, since the transgression of the first, hast attained a sinless perfection; make thy servants blessed, by making them righteous, through thy merits and grace!*

Upon the first verse of the sixth psalm, he thus teaches that strange doctrine, subversive of the moral attributes of the deity, the doctrine of vicarious punishment, and shews the innocent Jesus appeasing the anger

ger of the Father, by suffering for guilt not his own.

“Above, says he, is an angry God preparing to take vengeance; beneath, the fiery gulf ready to receive him; without him, a world in flames; within, the gnawing worm. Thus situated, he begins in extreme agony of spirit, *O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.* As often as we are led thus to express our sense of sin, and dread of punishment, let us reflect on him, *whose righteous soul, indued with a sensibility peculiar to itself, sustained the sins of the world, and the displeasure of the Father!*”

Pf. xxxvii. 39, 40. *But the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord; he is their strength in the time of trouble. And the Lord shall help them and deliver them: he shall deliver them from the wicked, and save them because they put their trust in him.* One wonders what could lead our author thus to paraphrase, and address this to Jesus Christ. *Of thee, O Lord Jesu, is our salvation; be thou our strength in this mortal life, which is a time of trouble; help us against*
our

our spiritual enemies, and deliver us from them ; deliver us from the wicked one, and from all evil ; and save us from the guilt and punishment thereof ; because we put our trust in thee, and in thee alone."

Pf. lxxii. 18, 19. *Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, who only doth wondrous things. And blessed be his glorious name for ever and ever ; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory ! Amen and Amen.*

Dr. Horne immediately proceeds in a very extraordinary manner to apply this passage to Christ. ' Blessed, therefore, says he, be thou, O Lord Jesu ; for *thou art the Lord God, even the God of Israel*, who hast wrought such miracles of mercy for the salvation of the church ; and blessed by the tongues of men and angels be thy holy and glorious name ; and let the whole earth be filled with the amazingly transcendent, and inconceivable majesty of thy most excellent glory, for evermore ! So be it."

Pf. lxxviii. 38. *But being full of compassion, he forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not, yea many a time turned he his anger away, &c.* Dr. Horne accomodates

this

this to Jesus Christ, as the God of the Israelites then, and the God of christians now.

‘Be not angry, says he, o Lord Jesu, for ever, with them or with us; but remember of what materials we are made, and into what a state we are fallen; how weak and how frail we are; remember this, o Lord, and forgive us; and teach us to remember it, that we may forgive one another.”

Pf. lxxxiv. 1. *How amiable are thy tabernacles, o LORD of hosts.* ‘How amiable then, (adds Dr. Horne) may the christian say, are those eternal mansions, from whence sin and sorrow are excluded; — where thou, o blessed Jesu, LORD of hosts, king of men and angels, dwellest in glorious majesty, constituting by thy presence the felicity of thy chosen!”

Pf. civ. 1. *Bless the LORD, o my soul: o Lord my God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with honour and majesty, &c.*

‘The scripture informs us, proceeds Dr. Horne, that the same person, who redeemed the world, did also create it. In the iiid psalm, we are assured by St. Paul, to the Son, it is said, *Thou, Lord, in the beginning*

ning hast laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. To him, therefore, as creator, is the civth psalm likewise addressed.'

Dr. Horne's reference here is to Heb. i. 10, 11, 12. But the attentive reader will find, that the author of the epistle does not apply the words of psalm cii. 25. to Christ at all. But having mentioned the high dignity of Christ's office, and the benefits we derive from him, he instantly, in a way not unusual with him, devoutly turns himself to God, from whom Christ, and all the blessings of the gospel came, and applies the words of the psalmist upon the occasion, in acknowledgement of the divine power and goodness, and kind design to perpetuate those blessings. See Emlyn's works, vol. ii. P. 340, 341.

Pf. cxlv. 1, 2. *I will extol thee, my God, o king, and will blefs thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I blefs thee, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever.* 'The same divine person, continues Dr. Horne, who was, in a particular manner, the God and king of Israel, now standeth in those relations

lations to the gentile christian church, and by her is *extolled* in the words of this psalm, originally composed and used for that purpose among the Israelites. Christ is our God, who hath saved us, according to his covenant and promise; he is our *king*, who, &c.

REMARKS.

Such and the like explanations and applications of the psalms, which I have produced, and which make a large part of two volumes, you, who are unprejudiced, will at first sight, perceive to be intirely foreign to the intent of the writers, and purely the fruits of lively imagination, and of the notions (y) with which

(y) In like manner, in psalm cxix. 1. our author findeth the doctrine of original sin; and sadly marris and mangles the beautiful affecting simplicity and piety of the psalm throughout, by his spiritual christian meanings thrust upon it. To give one instance which the book opens upon.

Ver. 144. *The righteousness of thy testimonies is everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.* In every sense, proceeds Dr. Horne, o Lord Jesu, thy righteousness is everlasting

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with which Dr. Horne came prepossessed to the reading of them. As such, they cost no trouble, no expence of much thought or inquiry, but are rather a pious kind of amusement; so that it is not to be wondered at that the doctor should express himself so delighted with the employment. And so far all would be very well, if his notions were confined to himself. But in the mean time, his rank in the university, and the church, attract, and impose upon, readers, who never think or examine for themselves; and who hold it a wonderful thing for a learned man to find out the gospel preached even by David, in so large and particular a manner, as no one had ever heard of before: whilst rational minds turn away from a system of religion, so fanciful and precarious.

2. But the great point in which Dr. Horne will mislead you, and all that implicitly

ing: grant me the understanding of it, in every sense, and we shall live in thee now, and with thee for ever.

One is concerned to note, that many parts of this commentary on the psalms consist thus of words without meaning.

The hungry sheep look up and are not fed.

implicitly follow him, is with respect to the God you are to worship.

It has been made, and it is, most apparent, that one single person alone, is spoken of, and addressed in prayer, as God, throughout the sacred writings, by patriarchs, prophets, by Moses, by Jesus Christ, and his apostles. Christ taught the heavenly Father, who was his father as well as of the rest of mankind, to be the only true God. He worshiped him and prayed to him himself, and directed his followers to pray to him; and never taught them that there was any other person who was God, or to be worshiped.

Now in the face of this most glaring evidence to the contrary, Dr. Horne clothes our Saviour Jesus Christ in the character of the most high God, which he was the farthest of all things from ever pretending to; prays to him perpetually; calls him God, LORD God, God of Israel, the LORD of hosts; addresses him as possessed of all the attributes of the deity, and particularly of that of compassion and mercy.

3. This

3. This manner of praying to Jesus Christ as God, the LORD God, LORD of hosts, God of Israel, certainly makes two Gods, two LORD Gods, two LORDS of hosts, two Gods of Israel, unless the God and Father of Jesus Christ and of us all, is to be excluded from being God, LORD God, LORD of hosts, God of Israel. And although Dr. Horne's prejudices and subtle metaphysical distinctions, may prevent his perceiving, that he thus introduces, and acknowledges, and worships, two Gods; I cannot suppose that you yourselves could pray to Jesus Christ in these characters, and dressed in these attributes, and then invoke the heavenly Father in the same way, and by the same characters, and not be most fully persuaded that you were praying to two Gods. But you know, that this is forbidden and condemned by the highest authority in the universe; I AM JEHOVAH THY GOD; *Thou shalt have no other Gods but me.*

4. What a scene of inexplicable confusion and perplexity is here introduced! According to Dr. Horne, the christian world has hitherto been mistaken, in imagining,

for instance, the psalms civth, cxlvth, to be addressed to the single person of Jehovah, the LORD God, God of Israel, who made the world. For the doctor finds these titles to belong to Jesus Christ, and affirms him to be the object, in whose honour these hymns were composed, and who is invoked in them.

How then shall we direct our thoughts? you will naturally inquire. To whom shall we turn ourselves in singing these divine songs? whose praises are we to celebrate? Are we to lift up our hearts to Jesus, and to exclude the heavenly Father, declared by Jesus to be the only true God? Or has Dr. Horne any rule to give us, when we are to address our devotions to the one, when to the other? what psalms belong to the one, what to the other?

5. You cannot but remark, what a blemish is hereby fixed upon the gospel, and stumbling block thrown before those who reject it, that after a period of near 2000 years, when it's founder, the holy Jesus, gave his sanction to the decision of his predecessor, Moses, the divine law-giver of the
jews

jews (t) (Deut. vi. 4. Mark xii. 29. 32.)
that Jehovah, their God, was one Jehovah;

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(t) I cannot here forbear citing a very serious and solemn remonstrance upon this most important object, by a late eminent minister of the church established, Mr. Hopkins, above-mentioned; eminent for those virtues which will highly distinguish and promote him in the future world, though his condition and circumstances here, were always low and narrow, and particularly at the close of his long, laborious, useful life.

In his note on Exodus xx. 3. after having remarked, that the christian lawgiver, our Saviour Jesus Christ, had established by his express authority the solemn declaration of Moses, Deut. vi. 4. by adopting and reinforcing his very words, concerning the divine unity, he proceeds to say: ' By what rightful authority have the greatest mortals determined, that there are two other persons equally intitled to honour, worship, and glory with the one Supreme God, and that they, together with him, form one Supreme Being? A doctrine absolutely inconsistent with the principles of reason, and expressly contrary to above two thousand texts in the Old Testament, and above a thousand in the New, (I speak upon examination) which either strongly set forth, or necessarily imply, the *Unity* of God in the strict literal sense. I am afraid that the Athanasian doctrine and worship seems little less than a breach of the covenant established between God and the Jewish people in the Old Testament, and between God and all mankind in the New. The governors of the church should be exhorted in the most earnest manner, to take speedy and effectual

it should be the doctrine of all the great churches in christendom, not excepting the protestant

fectual methods to review our public forms, and reduce them to the standard of scripture. In the beginning of the litany, there are invoked **FOUR** distinct objects of religious worship; which form of worship has not the least foundation, or even colour of evidence to support it, from the beginning of the Old to the end of the New Testament: and the learned of all denominations are challenged to produce any acts of religious worship to **FOUR** distinct objects.'

'The Ten Commandments are read in the morning service of all the churches of England and Ireland every Lord's day; and at the same time a doctrine and form of worship are kept up in express contradiction to the first commandment.'

'Christian professors have often condemned the jews for their prejudices and blindness, that they do not see and acknowledge the Messiah, of whom there are so many clear prophecies delivered in their own scriptures. On the other hand the jews, I think, may with equal justice retort a similar charge upon great numbers of professed christians, who though they are perpetually reading, or hearing read, the ten commandments, in the first of which God is declared to be one, in words not possible to be interpreted in any other sense, yet in defiance to the clearest and strongest light, they presume to acknowledge and worship **THREE** co-equal Gods in one substance. If the New Testament really maintained this absurd corrupt doctrine,
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protestant church of England, and particularly at this hour maintained by Dr. Horne, a distinguished and approved dignitary in it; that the humble and pious Jesus is Jehovah, Jehovah God, the Lord God, whom all are to worship; so that he is at the same time a worshiper of God, and the God who is worshiped. And you are thus, according to Dr. Horne, to worship a man-God, a creature-God, one acknowledged to have been like ourselves, as the most high; instead of HIM, who is *invisible, eternal, whom no one hath seen nor can see, who dwelleth in the light which no one can approach*: who hath said, *To whom will ye liken me? and to whom*

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shall

it would be an unanswerable argument that it never came from God, it being impossible that the two Testaments should contradict each other in this grand fundamental article, the UNITY of God, on which all true religion is founded. But to our rational satisfaction, Moses and Christ are fully agreed in maintaining this essential doctrine, as we have already seen; and it is the express duty of all churches through every part of the globe, to remove all forms that break in upon the important point of the UNITY of God.

shall I be equaled (u). I am Jehovah, and none else; beside me there is no God, Is. xl. 25. xlv. 5.

6. In the midst of the frequent devotional addresses, scattered throughout these two volumes of Dr. Horne's upon the psalms, although besides Jesus Christ, there is another God often named; yet I have not observed one instance of prayer being offered up to that other God; but all to Jesus Christ, who is stiled God, the LORD God, the LORD of hosts, &c. This cannot but make deep impression on you, and upon all those who may be

(u) *I AM Jehovah, and none else: beside ME there is no God.* This very circumstance, viz. the use of the singular pronoun, whenever God *speaks*, or *is addressed*, or *named*, is itself a full demonstration, that there is but one single person who is God, to the exclusion of Jesus Christ, and of all others. There is no taking refuge here in a pretended reverence for God, and saying, that we ought not to pry with too curious eyes into the divine nature. For as the point in question is confessed not to be knowable by nature's light, but to be of divine revelation, we must study the words which convey it to us, and examine them as we do the words of any other books; and they, we thus see, upon the face of them, and no less, on the strictest scrutiny, are found to teach the divine unity in the most absolute sense, that *there is one Jehovah, and his name one.* Zech. xiv. 9.

be inclined to put implicit faith in him, as a most learned man, and head of a college, and endanger your offering up your devotions to a man like yourselves, as God almighty; especially as he is represented full of mercy and goodness, and the contrary quality of anger is attributed to the other God spoken of in these commentaries.

From what source soever Dr. Horne derived this worship and practice, it is not certainly to be found in the bible, and therefore is most reprehensible, if that sacred book is to be regarded as our standard and directory.

SECTION XVI.

The reply of the Students to Dr. Horne.

I HOPE now, ye, virtuous youth, and diligent inquirers after truth, that it is not too much for me to presume, that the foregoing arguments may have swayed so much with some of you at least, that, in your turns, you would be disposed to express yourselves to Dr. Horne, for his pamphlet and address to

Dr.

Dr. Priestley, in your names, in some such manner as the following.

*The students of Oxford and Cambridge,
to Dr. Horne, president of Magdalen Col-
lege, &c.*

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

“ We are extremely obliged to you for condescending to put on your undergraduate's gown for a while to serve us, and to preserve us from what you apprehend to be hurtful and erroneous doctrine, which Dr. Priestley would teach us.

“ But we think you much mistaken, though we are persuaded of your good intentions, in making us to say, that we think it right to declare our belief, that every thing contained in the liturgy and articles of our church is agreeable to the word of God, before we have inquired and examined, whether it be so, or not. And although it be the way, in which you began your own theological studies, it is far from recommending itself to us on that account, as it seems to us to have had an unhappy influence

ence upon yourself, and your own improvements.

“ We find also, that you have not mentioned some facts, which should have been made known to us. For that so far are things from being rightly constituted with respect to our church’s articles and liturgy, as you would make us believe, that some of the wisest and best members of it, have wished for, and endeavoured to promote a reformation in many things of great consequence, and among these some of the learned men that are now upon the episcopal bench.

“ We must conclude therefore, that the way of authority, and of submitting to the decisions of fallible men like ourselves, in what concerns our holy religion, which you propose to us, is not the way of arriving at the truth, in the judgment of persons of higher rank in the church than yourself; and we fear, that it has been the reason that for so many ages its progress has been retarded.

“ So far then from thinking Dr. Priestley so much to be blamed as you would make him for having no fixed creed, we are constrained to think you yourself highly blameable for having fixed your creed in the man-

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ner you have done, and for endeavouring to fix our's for us in the manner you do. On the contrary, we are convinced, that we ought never to have our opinions so unchangeable as you would make them, but to have our minds open to conviction, and to change of sentiment, whenever we see reason for it.

“ Although we do not dislike mirth and drollery in its season, and admire your talent in this respect, we do not think it a proper way of making reply to what is supported by reason and serious argument, and therefore we do not approve the application of it in the letter you have written to Dr. Priestley for us.

“ For, whatever you imagine, we think it far from being a matter to be treated with levity, to search and discover, as far as we can, who, and what is the Being that made us; to whom, it is, that we are to direct our prayers, and to depend upon. Whether we are to pray to three persons, or to two persons, or only to one? And also to procure all the satisfaction we can concerning the character of the God that made us,
and

and the nature of his divine administration : whether he be, of himself, perfectly good, and merciful, and benevolent; and not standing in need of another person to make him kind and forgiving to his frail, repenting creatures of mankind; which appears to be your opinion.

“ You frequently accuse those that are called Socinians, of torturing the language of scripture, and stretching it to quite another meaning than the sacred writers intended. But we fear this accusation will recoil upon yourself. For it has been proved upon you, sir, that you have not been sufficiently attentive to acquaint yourself critically with the sacred writings, as you would have done in order to interpret an ode of Horace, or a passage in Tacitus, or Thucydides. To this we cannot but attribute your having mistaken so many texts in the bible, and particularly your having been so much overseen in the sense which you have put upon St. Paul’s epistle to the hebrews. *true*

“ It is this want of a proper and critical study of the sacred writings, that we fear, has made you intirely to overlook the true condition

dition and character of Jesus Christ, so as to make him the supreme God, whilst he seems so plainly and continually to declare himself, and is declared throughout the scriptures, to have been one of our race, and a mighty prophet and messenger of the great God.

“ But, Sir, what most of all astonishes us, is your making Jesus Christ to be the LORD God, LORD of hosts, God of Israel, to whom the sacred writers of the psalms addressed themselves. We cannot divine, how you can be satisfied in this, when there is not any the least token or sign of it to be gathered, from the book of psalms, or any other of our sacred books. How are we to reconcile this your praying only to Jesus Christ, and calling him, God, LORD God, LORD of hosts, &c. when Jesus Christ himself, (John xvii. 3.) praying to the Father, calls him, *THEE, the only true God!* thereby, by the personal pronoun, confining the title intirely to one person? are we in contradiction to this, to worship two Gods? For surely we cannot exclude the Father from being the only true God. We wish to be relieved

relieved by you, Sir, out of this perplexity, into which you have thrown us."

We are, &c. your obliged,

Postscript.

Of Dr. Priestley's history of early opinions concerning Jesus Christ.

HAVING omitted the mention of this work of Dr. Priestley's in its proper place, when recommending to you his theological writings, I shall take the present opportunity of saying something of it, the most curious and valuable of them all: and I risque nothing in adding, that it could only be executed in the manner it has been done, by a superior genius, like his own; and also one, who to so much patient, unremitted industry, could add so many ingenious devices and mechanical arrangements to abridge his labour in sorting the vast materials before him, so as to finish in a few years, what would have required very many in the ordinary way, without such invention.

HERETOFORE, many christians, who saw that there was no foundation in the scriptures for

for the divinity of Christ, or for his being any thing more than a man with an extraordinary commission and power from God, did not know what to make of some the earliest christian writers embracing a contrary opinion, viz. of his having preexisted, before he was born of his mother Mary, at Bethlehem in Judea.

This difficulty Dr. Priestley solved in a most satisfactory manner, in the former part of his '*History of the corruptions of christianity*;' by shewing, that this early unscriptural doctrine concerning Christ, arose intirely from a few learned heathen converts, who mixed their philosophy with the gospel; and by proving also from authentic history, that the whole body of jewish christians, converted by the apostles themselves, did not believe either the divinity, or the preexistence of Jesus Christ. From which it is indubitably to be inferred, that the apostles never taught such a doctrine concerning Christ; as it is out of every degree and limit of probability, that they who had been taught by them, should have so immediately deserted their doctrine, upon a
matter

matter so important. And he shewed this opinion to have been at first nearly universal among gentile as well as jewish christians, these few philosophizing men excepted.

He also pointed out by what steps these men were drawn on to make Jesus Christ the supreme God; which, in the space of three centuries, they accomplished: but could not, all the while, bring the bulk of christians to accede to their doctrine, who continued to be unitarians, such as the apostles themselves, and the first converts to the gospel.

This work of Dr. Priestley's, was not suffered to pass without being controverted by several persons, among whom Dr. Horsley, lately promoted to the see of St. David's, much distinguished himself; though by no means to his credit with learned men, and judges of the subject. For perhaps there hardly ever was an instance, in which a controversial writer, was so intirely baffled, and confuted in every thing advanced by him, both from scripture, and early antiquity, to invalidate Dr. Priestley's positions; as has been verified with respect to Dr.

Z

Horsley.

Horsley. And this is the opinion of not a few among the learned, who are far from favouring Dr. Priestley's peculiar sentiments. To form a true judgment yourselves of the case, I would refer you to Dr. Priestley's Letters to Dr. Horsley, Archdeacon of St. Alban's, Part ii. and Part iii: to which, in point of honour, and for the sake of truth, he ought to make a just reply; or to give up the cause, and own he cannot defend it.

In consequence of this discussion of the subject with Dr. Horsley, yet not with a view to add to his triumphs over him, but for his own satisfaction, and that of others, the learned more especially, Dr. Priestley undertook this his last herculean work (*a*). In this he has brought to light, and displayed a vast accumulation of evidence, unknown before, "to prove the truth and the antiquity, as he himself speaks, of the proper unitarian doctrine, in opposition to the trinitarian and arian hypotheses;" deriving his information from the first sources only, having

(*a*) "The history of early opinions concerning Jesus Christ, compiled from original writers, proving that the christian church was at first unitarian, in four vols. 1786."

having perused all the original authors from the beginning, and produced almost 2000 passages from them; and having many others in reserve, equally important, if needed, to establish the facts for which he pleads.

Concerning however this large *field*, or more justly to speak, this overgrown *wood* of christian antiquity, which our author alone hath cleared up, and in which he hath made such discoveries; I would beg leave to observe to you;

1. That before he led the way, we were all much in confusion, and had no distinct ideas concerning that great corruption of the gospel, and of genuine christianity, called *Arianism*; I mean the doctrine which makes Jesus Christ to have been a great preexistent spirit, next to the eternal God, and deriving his being from him; who condescended to come into this world of ours, and to animate a human body, shrunk from his original dignity and power, first into the state of an embryo, next into that

of an helpless infant, till by degrees he became rational, &c. &c.

This doctrine, which has no countenance in the scriptures, but in a very few passages, of plainly wrong interpretation, Dr. Priestley has proved not to have been known in the christian church, till about the time of *Arius*; and has likewise shewn that the doctrine of the platonic fathers concerning Christ, which probably first began with Justin Martyr, or about his time, and has been mistaken for it, was quite another thing: Christ, according to them, not being a superangelic spirit, animating a human body, but the *logos*, the wisdom or reason of the divine being, his attribute, which these philosophers made a person of, and which, according to them, bore the same relation to the Father, that the platonic *υπερ*, which was their second principle, bore to the first principle, usually called *αγαθος*; or rather were the same with them. This they held to be intimately united to Jesus Christ, who was still a man, in their system, with a body and soul like the rest of us. (b)

I must

(b) In the first section of the conclusion of *The history of the early opinions concerning Jesus Christ*, vol. iv. p. 273, you,

I must own, that this wild, abstracted perversion of the true scripture-doctrine concerning Christ is to me less exceptionable, and less repugnant to reason, than the *arian* doctrine concerning him; which is a heap of incongruous, staggering improbabilities, from beginning to end: whether you suppose the great preexistent spirit, which was shut up in a human body of flesh and blood for 30 years, to have been the first and principal of created beings, and the subordinate creator of all things; or, one of an inferior class, with inferior powers.

2. *The distinction of the opinion of the early writers from that of the common people* was never before observed by any one; and being a thing wholly unknown to the first Socinians, they were exceedingly embarrassed in the defence of their sentiments, in point of antiquity. But we here see the seeming gap and chasm filled up, and that the doctrine of the apostles concerning their
divine

you have a clear and distinct account of the successive gradations of this platonic doctrine, till it ended in making Christ the most high God.

divine master being altogether one of the human race, was also the doctrine of all those that were immediately taught by and succeeded them, a few speculative men excepted, who would be wise *above what was written*.

3. The variety of curious knowledge of facts and opinions, contained in this work; the illustrations of the oriental philosophy; and the doctrine of Platonism in particular never so well exhibited before, must be pleasing and instructive to all, who wish to know the history of the human mind, an interesting history assuredly: so that throwing even the question of religion aside, it is a valuable accession to the literary world, but connected with that important object, it is above all price.

In a work of such compass and extent as this *history of early opinions concerning Jesus Christ*, in which you have the words of the original writers themselves, it was scarce to be expected that no mistakes would be committed. The author foresaw it to be unavoidable, and desired all allowance to be made, and to be told his faults, and he

+ May not this be said of Calvinists and would Trinitarians?

would gladly correct them. They have however turned out much fewer than could have been imagined, and none of them in the least affecting his main propositions and conclusions, though he has been told of them in an unhandsome way. But in whatever way it may come, it will be acceptable to him to hear of any errors or oversights, be they of greater or smaller consequence. With respect to the unworthy insinuations of some men, all that know any thing of Dr. Priestley, believe and are persuaded, that he would as soon be guilty of robbing on the highway, as of designedly misquoting or misinterpreting any passage in an antient writer to deceive others, and serve the purpose of a private party or opinion. For he has no interest in view, but that of truth, nor any desires but to have that in the best way promoted and established.

*Sept. 13th 1791.**F I N I S.*

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